This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07596578 4

The
Gordon Lester Ford
Collection
Presented by his Sons
Worthington Chauncey Ford
and
Paul Leicester Ford
to the
New York Public Library.

A 1/1/1

THE

Lady's Closet Library.

THE MARTHAS;

OR,

THE VARIETIES OF FEMALE PIETY.

BY ROBERT PHILIP,

OF MABERLY CHAPEL.

"Jesus loved Martha—and her sister."—*John.*

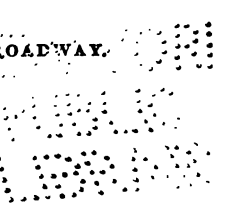
"Martha, Martha!"—*Luke.*

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."—*Jesus.*

FOURTH EDITION.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON & CO., 200 BROADWAY.

1836.



THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
157690
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
1899.

PREFACE.

THE Author did hope, that this volume would have embraced the Varieties of Female *Character*, as well as of Female Piety, because character and piety are so identical. He has, however, found it impossible to trace the developement of both, under the name of Martha. "THE LYDIAS, *or the Developement of Female Character*," will, therefore, follow this volume, and complete the first section of the Closet Library.

The Author gratefully acknowledges, that he has not appealed in vain to the Mothers or the Daughters in British "Israel."

NEWINGTON GREEN, 1836.

CONTENTS.

No.		P.
	Martha and the Marthas	
I.	Varieties, from Timidity	
	Allegory, No. 1—Rachel's Leprosy .	
II.	Varieties, from Oversight	
	Allegory, No. 2—Rachel's Exile . .	
III.	Varieties, from Mistakes	1
	Allegory, No. 3—Rachel's Cure . .	1
IV.	Varieties, from Inattention . . .	1
V.	Varieties, from Mistrust	1
VI.	Varieties, from Modesty	2
VII.	Varieties, from Fretfulness . . .	2

INTRODUCTION.

MARTHA AND THE MARTHAS.

THE key to the second volume of the Lady's Closet Library, must be taken from the fact, that pious females, who have not exactly the spirit of Mary, are usually ranked with Martha. Indeed, they regard themselves as Marthas, and are somewhat doubtful whether they have really "chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from" them. It is, therefore, because these who are not very like Mary, class themselves, and are classed, with Martha, that I bring under her name, "The Varieties of Female Piety." Many of its varieties are almost as unlike her, as she was unlike her sister: but all of them, so far as they are occasioned by faults or defects of character and temper, require the same treatment which Martha received from Christ;—tenderness enough to prevent despair, and reproof enough to check presumption.

Martha's faults are not the only faults, which the Saviour rebukes and chastises, in all whom He loves. His object is, to have all his real disciples conformed to His own image; and, therefore, he contends against whatever, in each of them, is most unlike himself. Whatever had been the besetting sin of Martha's character or spirit, his rebuke,—"*Martha, Martha!*" would have been equally pointed and unequivocal. It applies, therefore, to all those varieties of piety which, like hers, leave some doubt upon all minds (the possessors not excepted) of its present reality, or of its future issue. The rebuke bears directly, not indeed upon all imperfection, but upon all imprudence and oversight, negligence and self-will. Accordingly, it is applied to themselves, by many pious females, who never went Martha's lengths in ill-temper. There are meek and amiable women, who feel instinctively that they have more of Martha, than of Mary, in their character. Some of them, although not "cumbered about much *serving*," are yet so cumbered about something, that their hearts are almost divided between God and the world. Others, again, although not "careful and troubled about *many* things," are yet so absorbed

with some earthly good or evil in their lot, that it is very doubtful to themselves, whether heavenly things have any real place in their affections. Others, again, have so much to contend with, either from temperament or condition, from trials or temptations, that they are almost the creatures of circumstances, and vary in their feelings with all the variations of their health or prosperity. They are

> "Every thing by turns,
> And nothing long."

It would be easy (and as *useless* as easy) to depict these faults and defects. It would be still easier, and more useless, to condemn them. They can only be reproved with effect, by what can *cure* them effectually. Nothing but the remedy provided for them in the Gospel, can bring home their sin or folly to the heart. It is only when we see, from the designs of Grace, and from the character of Glory, what we *ought* to be, and what we *may* be, that we acknowledge, even to ourselves, what we really are. It is when confronted with the Image of Christ and the Image of the Heavenly, that we become alarmed at the "earthy" features of our own image. No light, but the

light of eternity, can expose our faults full and yet set us to correct them willingly, at the same time. We may yield partly to *human* influence; but nothing less than Divine authority, and that only in its *paternal* spirit and eternal sanctions, can sway our inclinations.

Convinced of all this by my own experience, and from the contact or correspondence into which my "GUIDES" have brought me with so many of the varieties of male and female piety, at home and abroad, I have not confronted the peculiarities of men and women "professing godliness;" nor contrasted the Marthas with the Marys; nor even compared the sexes: but have brought all the varieties of piety, to the *one* standard by which they will all be tried at last,—the *image* of Christ! And where there is not conscience enough to take lessons *there* —I certainly do not include such characters amongst the varieties of Christians. They vary too little from the world, to have any identity with the Church. In a word, I have nothing to say, in this volume, to any female who is quite satisfied with her own piety, either as to its kind or degree. It is intended to encourage those who "stand in doubt" of themselves, and to "stir up, by way of remem-

brance," the "pure minds" of those who are doubted by others.

Such being my design, I have said little about Martha. I entertain no doubt of her piety. She presents, in her honest, although bustling, regard to the Saviour, a noble contrast to her nation, and to the mass of her sex. She was even more prompt than Mary, to meet Christ, when he came to Bethany on the death of Lazarus; and she was the first to whisper cautiously to her, (whom she had once, perhaps often, scolded,) "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." He had called for Mary; but he had not sent Martha with his message. She, however, would not trust the tenderness or the prudence of any one, to break the good news to her weeping sister; but, the moment she saw that they were *good* news, away she ran, to prepare Mary for them, and to bring her to Jesus without fear or surprise. Thus Martha was as much delighted, on this occasion, to take her sister to the feet of Jesus, to hear his "gracious words," as she was once offended with her for sitting at his feet.

All this is highly creditable to her; and it explains, in some degree, why "Jesus loved

Martha," as well as Mary. Still, I dare not take her piety out of the *cloud*, which the Saviour's rebuke,—"Martha, Martha!"—left upon it. That rebuke was as much intended for warning, as His continued love was for encouragement. It would, therefore, be as *unwise* to make the star of His love disperse the cloud of His reproof entirely, as it would be *unfair* to make the cloud eclipse the star, at all. They are equally over Martha's head, in her history; and, therefore, I dare not separate nor soften them; but must leave the star in all its brightness, and the cloud in all its darkness, to make their own impression upon every female, who is conscious of any thing which deserves the "Martha, Martha!" of the Saviour she loves, and desires to be loved by.

THE VARIETIES OF

FEMALE PIETY.

No. I.

VARIETIES, FROM TIMIDITY.

You are familiar with the question,—"*Who hath despised the day of small things?*" It has been transferred, not unfairly nor unaptly, from the foundation-stone of the second temple in Jerusalem, to the first symptoms and marks of that "good work" of grace in the heart, by which we become living Temples, or "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Now, whoever else may despise these incipient signs of conversion, God does not. Even when there is nothing but a penitent spirit, and whilst both

joy and peace are unknown, we are warranted to say with David, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." This is pleasing! But the Spirit of inspiration led Isaiah beyond David, in thus condescending to the "low estate" of commencing piety. Isaiah was warranted to class the *trembling* amongst the "contrite ones," even when God, as the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity, was describing the hearts to which He would look with compassion, and in which He would dwell with complacency. Isaiah lvii. 15. Neither the temple on earth, nor even the temple of heaven,—although the former resounded with Hosannas, and the latter with Hallelujahs, could so engross the attention of Jehovah, as to divert it from true penitents, even whilst their prayers were only as the sighing of prisoners, or but groanings which cannot be uttered. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? But to this man will I look,

even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." This is condescension! Who would despise the day of small things, after thus seeing how God delights to honour it? In the presence of this fact, you can see, at a glance, why there is joy amongst the angels of God in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth. God himself rejoiceth over them "with singing." It is not in this connexion, that even a stern theorist, who calls nothing faith, but assurance; and nothing conversion, but the witness of the Spirit, would dare to say,—"the devils believe, and tremble." They do tremble at the word of God; but not in a broken or contrite spirit. It is not a sense of their own guilt or vileness, which awes them. They do not despair because they feel unworthy of hope. There is no humility in their horror, and no contrition in their terror: whereas, when you tremble most at the word of God, it is because you feel yourself worthy of its threatenings, and unworthy of its great and precious promises. And it would not be even a

"day of small things" in your experience, if you had never trembled at the word of God! There is no "good thing in the heart toward the Lord," until there is some serious fear of his anger, and a real sense of being utterly unworthy of his mercy.

It is, indeed, a great thing, to get rid of the "fear which hath torment." Nothing is more desirable than that it should be "cast out." It is never cast out, however, by casting away a sense of unworthiness, nor by trying to think lightly of the Divine anger. It is "perfect love" that casteth out tormenting fear, 1 John iv. 14; and love never can be perfected or improved, if you despise the day of small things. Your love to the Saviour is not insincere, because you have many fears. It would, indeed, be very questionable, and equivocal too, if you had no fears. "No strange thing hath befallen you," if, as yet, you have more fears than hopes.

This is, however, a critical state to be in. It is not uncommon, certainly; but still, it is dangerous. Some have "done despite to the

Spirit of grace," by despising the day of small things, as *too* small to be worth much immediate notice; and others, by despairing, because it was so unlikely to lead on to a day of *great* things. Against both these extremes, I would put you upon your guard. They are equally perilous, and have proved *fatal to many*. Perhaps, you know some one in your own circle, —a sister, or brother, or friend, who is in danger of quenching the Spirit, because not aware of the varieties of manner and degree, in which the Spirit begins the good work of grace. You may have been at a loss, how to answer the objections of some one, whose occasional feelings seem to you, "tokens for good," whilst to him, or her, they appear too slight and evanescent to deserve attention. Would it not be both wise and kind, to bring the following appeal under the notice of such a one? It is solemn and pointed; but not too much so, when there is a disposition to despise the day of small things.—Now, no "good thing" toward God, and the Lamb, in the heart, can be so small,

as to be *unworthy* of your watchful and prayerful notice. Passing thoughts and momentary impressions, may be unworthy of being called "a saving work of grace upon your soul." Conviction is not conversion, nor is feeling faith. It might, therefore, be very wrong to conclude that you have "passed from death to life," or been "translated from darkness unto light," merely because you have some sense of your need of this divine change, and some hope or wish to experience it. You do, however, know something of its nature, and feel occasionally its necessity. You may regret, but you do not "*marvel*," that you must be born again of the Spirit, before you can enter the kingdom of heaven. You know too much both of heaven and of your own heart, to be surprised (however you may be offended) when you are told that you are unfit for heaven. And is this conviction nothing? It may be—it is—a day of small things, compared with the great searchings of heart, and with the strong cries and tears, which the necessity of being born

again is producing in some of your family or friends. There may be no comparison between the strength of your convictions, and the cry of the Pentecostal converts. Any fear or hope you feel, may be but as the mere shadow of their impressions. What then? So much the more need you have to take care that you do not despise the approaches of the Holy Spirit to your own heart.

Do not say in answer to this appeal, "I am not at all sure that the Spirit is striving with me, or doing any thing for me." It is easy to utter these words, when an excuse is wanted on the spur of the moment, for delay or indecision in religion: but you durst not utter them deliberately, after looking fairly at their meaning. Your tongue would cleave to the roof of your mouth, were you to try to say,—"I am one, whom the Spirit of God never once influenced to think or pray. He has been moving upon the face of the waters of the Sanctuary where I worship, converting sinners, and consoling penitents, and sanctifying believers,

but he never suggested one good thought in my mind, nor awakened one holy desire, nor shed one ray of light upon my path of duty or interest. However He moved in power or glory, and wherever He wrought, He passed me by—let me alone!"

This would be "*lying* against the Holy Ghost!" Had even your occasional impressions been fewer, and your past resolutions feebler than you know them to have been, you would not dare to speak thus, lest you should provoke the Spirit of God to let you alone for ever. Why, it is one great reason for any hope you have of ever being called by grace, that you have felt, and do feel, that the Spirit has not let you alone. It is because you are not given up to a seared conscience, nor to a reprobate mind, that you venture to calculate upon some future "day of power," coming in time enough to prepare you for eternity. Accordingly, were you quite sure that such a day of power would not come, unless, from this moment, you set yourself to act upon your

present convictions, you would be very glad to admit that what you have already felt, was, although not the first fruit of the Spirit, the breaking up of "the fallow ground" of the heart, for the good seed of the Word. Well; the Holy Ghost does say, "*To-day*, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your heart."

Do not evade this warning by saying, "that you would follow the leadings of the Spirit, if He would only lead you, as powerfully and sensibly, as he does some whom you know." You have no more right to dictate to the Holy Spirit the manner in which he shall deal with you, than to dictate to Providence the way in which it shall treat you. Now, you would not presume to lay it down as an indispensable condition of your giving yourself to the Lord and to the Church, that he should give you whatever *temporal* blessings you may think best for you. You know that you cannot stipulate with God to have all your own will, in "the things which pertain to life." Why, then, in the things which "pertain to godliness?"

Ponder Paul's solemn question: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, (the Spirit,) that he may *instruct* HIM?" 1 Cor. ii. 16. Can you, in the face of this caution, say that you will not honour nor own the Holy Ghost, unless He act with you, just as He has done with others? Surely not! It may not, indeed, be altogether wrong to wish for such an awakening as the Jailor's; or for such a flower-like opening of the heart as Lydia's; or for such a rejoicing discovery of the glory of Christ as the Eunuch's; or even for such a constraining impulse from the love of Christ, as that which carried the Corinthians before it, like vessels with a fair wind, upon a mighty spring-tide: but it is wrong, to insist upon one or other of these modes of conversion, as the condition of your turning to the Lord. You may, like Ephraim, pray, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned;" and like David, "Draw me, and I will run after Thee;" but you must not prescribe to God either the precise weapon of power by which He shall turn you, or the precise cord of love by

which he shall draw you. Leave the selection of means and modes of Divine operation in the hands of Divine wisdom; and, in the mean time, cherish the sacred impressions which have already been made upon your heart and conscience. They are more valuable to you, and involve your eternal welfare more deeply, than the mantle of Prophecy, or the gift of Miracles, were even both to descend upon you. Prophets have perished, and workers of mighty miracles have become apostates; but no one ever drew back to perdition, who honestly and humbly sought for the renewing of the Holy Ghost. O, then, quench not, grieve not, vex not, limit not, the Spirit of God!

This appeal may not be altogether useless to yourself: for although, in general, you do not despise the day of small things, there may be some of "the things of the Spirit," which you too lightly esteem. His "*shadows*, as well as His lights," (as Sheshbazzar would have said,) are instructive. He can lead by the

Pillar, as a *cloud;* as well as by the Pillar, as a flame of *fire*. I mean, that the Spirit is often present, and working mightily too, when we imagine that he is withdrawn entirely. This is no paradox. We are so much in the habit of confounding the work and witness of the Spirit, with *comfort*, that we are for ever ready, when we are uncomfortable, to think Him "afar off." But this is quite a mistake! He is not standing afar off, much less forgetting us, when we are left to feel that our strength is weakness; and our ability to hope, dependent; and our inclination to persevere, precarious. He is, indeed, working *deep* in our hearts, when we are afraid to look at them. Humility, and self-abasement, and self-distrust, are as much fruits of the Spirit, as love, joy, or peace. And, accordingly, by both His *lights* and *shadows*, we are sent to the Cross and the Mercy-seat; to the Bible and the Sanctuary, praying with equal fervency, "Lord, save, or I perish."

This is not, however, all that I mean. I am

quite persuaded that some of the most direct influences of the Holy Spirit, or those which come from the throne, as JEREMY TAYLOR says ejaculatory prayer goes to it, "in a *straight* line," are least attended to by us. For, have you not often felt upon your spirit the impulse, as it were, of an invisible hand, gently pushing you off your chair, that you might go into your closet; or rise to take up your Bible, as more wanted than the book you were reading? Have you not occasionally felt, as if you were haunted by the presence of a dying neighbour, or by the urgency of his watching angels, to go out and speak a word in season, or, at least, to show that you had Christian sympathy? Have not many things occurred to you as hints, wanted at home; and as plans, likely to do good at home, which, if you had communicated or acted upon whilst they were fresh in your mind, might have been very useful to others, and saved you from the self-upbraiding which follows the neglect of relative duty?

In thus recalling such angel-visits of Divine influence, by which new duties are suggested, or improvements in old duties enforced, nothing is farther from my design than to make any duty dependent upon impulse. The Spirit will not supersede the law of duty, by the grace of help. He does, however, help us in obeying that law, by throwing new and impressive lights upon its bearings, and upon the best way of following them out. Whilst, therefore, I would solemnly warn you against following any impulse, however plausible, which is not founded upon express rule, I would most affectionately urge you not to quench or resist the Holy Ghost, when he makes the letter or the spirit of any scriptural duty "arise in your hearts like a day-star," and shine as a light in a dark place. Unto such illuminations, you "do well to take heed." It will never be a day of great things in your devotional experience, if you let such direct rays from heaven pass unnoticed. Do not wonder that the COMFORTER will not always come into

your closet, nor meet you regularly at the sacrament, when you wish him to do so—if you often refuse to go alone *with* him, or out *for* him, when he is whispering to you what he would have you to do. This "still small voice" is one of the small things which you must not despise. "If you do," (Sheshbazzar would have said,) "God may *reverse* the Horeb vision of Elijah; and make the stormy wind, the earthquake and the fire, follow the still small voice."

These, however, are but passing hints. I want, in order to encourage you to prize and cherish the beginnings of the good work of grace in your own soul, to mark most attentively, how the Saviour estimated and treated even "the blade" of true piety, before "the full corn," or "the ear" had shot forth. He did not despise the day of small things! He often treated as "great things," prayers and faith which others would have despised, and which the offerers themselves were afraid or ashamed of, as too weak and imperfect to be accepted.

Both the proofs and promises of this delightful fact are, of course, rising in your memory like stars, in light and loveliness. You could repeat them, without my quoting them at all. So far well. But let us just look over some of them for once, as illustrations of the Oracle on which this essay is founded, that we may see and feel how transportingly true it is.

I know not which of them is your favourite. Mine is, that sweet assurance to young and weak disciples, "He shall feed his flock as a Shepherd; He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom." You cannot be weaker than a lamb is, when it requires such care from the shepherd. And remember; it is the weakness, and not the *innocence* of the lamb, which engages thus the shepherd's sympathies.

The allusion is from the East. Often, on going out amongst the folds in the morning, after having kept watch all night, against the wolves, the shepherd finds a young lamb, chilled with the dew or the frost of the night,

and unable to follow the flock to green pastures or still waters. He raises it gently from the ground, and wraps it to his bosom under his own warm cloak, and carries it forward, thus, until it revive. Now "the Great Shepherd," is just such a "good shepherd!" All the sheep, and even some under-shepherds, may not have tenderness nor patience, to watch over such a lamb as you, nor to wait until you are able to follow them on hill and through valley: but the Shepherd of souls, is the Bishop of souls; and he will neither leave nor forsake you. He can be "touched with a feeling of your infirmities," and thus can bear with them, until you can bear to move and rest with all his flock. He will even gather you in his arms, until you can walk in his footsteps; and carry you in his bosom, until you can follow him whithersoever he goeth. Thus, He does not despise the day of small things: but according to their smallness, makes his care and tenderness great. And, will you despair of weakness, which He pities? Will you give up hope, whilst He

gives this heed, and hand, and heart, to the weak in faith, and to the fainting in hope?

Take another view of your case. "A bruised reed shall he not break." No; the music it makes at first, may be neither harmony nor melody; may be rather sad than sweet; but He will not break it, nor cast it away, because of its broken notes. He will mend and moisten it, until its tones are clear and melodious. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," He perfects praise. Many a bruised reed, which was once almost as dumb or dull as the harps upon the willows of Babylon, is now sounding out the New Song, with not a little of both the spirit and compass of the golden harps before the throne of God. And, however bruised, you are not a broken reed. A broken reed is cast away from all the means of mending. But you are not only in the land of of the living, and thus in the place of hope; but you are also under the care of a Minister, or under the guidance of a friend, or have access to some book, whose chief object is to

tune and strengthen bruised reeds, until they can

——"Join their cheerful songs,
With angels round the throne."

Remember; Jesus says, (and you can surely take his word!) "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The night of penitential weeping, will be followed by the morning of believing joy. You can review in this way, at your leisure, the other proofs of the Saviour's considerate and compassionate regard to the day of small things. In the meantime, whilst these two are before you, and you are admiring them, I must remind you, that none of them are intended to reconcile you to the *continuance* of a day of small things, in either your faith or holiness. It is, that small things may become great things, that they are thus watched by Heaven, and thus commended to the watchfulness and tenderness of the Church on earth. "The blade" of piety has the promise of "the early rain," just that the

ear and the full corn in the ear may come on to meet "the latter rain."

But whilst the first appearances of heart-felt piety are thus not overlooked by the Saviour, neither are they overrated by him. The reed, though bruised, is called a reed; but it is not *complimented* as sweet enough in its sound. So also, the smoking flax is not threatened with quenching; but neither is its *smoke* commended. In connexion with both emblems it is added, "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." In prophetic language, this amounts to the same thing as the apostolic promise, "He who began the good work, will carry it on." Thus, we are as much bound to grow in grace, as we are encouraged to trust in grace, by both the condescension of the Father, and the tenderness of the Son, towards our day of small things.

In a word, it must not be always a day of small things with us; for we may soon have great trials, or great temptations; and small faith or patience will not sustain them well.

"What will ye do in the day of visitation?" is, therefore, a question which ought not to be lost sight of entirely, even at this stage of your experience. Do not, indeed, forbode evil; but do not forget that it will come, sooner or later, in some form. It may come very soon, and severely too, if you sit down contented with this day of small things. Let the following allegory of RACHEL'S LEPROSY, teach you wisdom. And be not discouraged, because you cannot see how there can come a day of *great things* in your experience. You may acquire great peace, great comfort, and great influence. In every thing good, you may be much greater than you are; and although you will never call nor think your holiness great, even when others feel it to be great both in its beauty and strength, resolve that it shall not be *less* in either than care can make it.

ALLEGORY. No. 1.

RACHEL'S LEPROSY.

THE IOM HACCHIPURIM, or the great day of atonement, drew nigh again; and Sheshbazzar, although "old and gray-headed," prepared to appear before God in Zion. For the Beer-shebean eagle (as Rachel called him) seemed to "renew his youth," annually, from the very moment the expiation trumpets summoned the tribes to Jerusalem. Their sound fell on his ear, like a voice from the excellent glory; and their signal for pilgrimage was welcomed by him, as Elijah welcomed the cherubic chariot of his translation. He was no longer able to go up to Jerusalem, "three times a year;" and, therefore, he preferred to be there on the DAY OF DAYS, that he might learn, as he said, from the High Priest, to enter within the veil of

eternity, bearing only the blood and incense of propitiation, as all his introduction and plea. Thus his *spirit* passed into the Holy of Holies even before the High Priest; and often lingered at the mercy-seat, or bathed in the Sheckinah of glory, long after He had come out to bless the people. That benediction, Sheshbazzar welcomed as his own warrant to kneel in *spirit*, where the priest had ministered; and thus to realize his own entrance into heaven.

This was his meaning when he called his pilgrimage, his translation; and his staff and scrip, his chariot and horses of fire; for Beersheba, compared with Jerusalem, was to him, on that solemn feast day, as the earth compared with heaven. And yet, Beersheba was dear to the good old man: for Abraham's well was still there; and, although the trees of Abraham's grove had passed away, like the Angels who once rested under their shadow, "the place thereof" was not unknown. Oaks of Mamre, and palm trees of Lahairoi, had replaced them.

Sheshbazzar often drank at that well, and mused in that spot, in the very spirit of its Patriarchal owner, and of its Angelic visitors. Still, it was not Zion! It was the sepulchre of his fathers and of his children, but it was not the sanctuary of his God. His FIG TREE was there; but his TREE OF LIFE was upon mount Zion.

The prospect of his translation did not, however, so absorb his spirit, as to divert his sympathies from those who had to stay at home. Having, like Elijah, thrown his mantle over Esrom and Rachel, he continued to commune with them, until the moment of his departure; and to pray that a double portion of his spirit might rest upon them. And never did they stand in more need of counsel or prayer. They had been betrothed in the month *Nisan;* but when the Tisri trumpets were blown, Esrom showed no inclination to go up to Jerusalem. He was not "glad" when Sheshbazzar said unto him, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord." He had tried to persuade himself, that

it was not his *duty this year!* Rachel was drooping in both health and spirits: and surely it could not be duty to leave her alone! She herself tried to think that, for *once*, Esrom might be excused; for she felt, at times, as low as if the Angel of Death was not far off. Even Sheshbazzar was uneasy on her account. He feared something *worse* than death: for Rachel's mind was one, which might be thrown off its *balance* by an excess of either grief or joy. Its very *strength* was more perilous than weakness; because she put it *all* forth upon whatever interested her feelings deeply. She threw her whole soul, equally, into human and Divine things, by turns. On the day of her *betrothment*, she thought of nothing else; and on the day after, which was the Sabbath, she was so absorbed by Sheshbazzar's exposition of the Law and the Prophets, in the Synagogue, that she forgot it entirely.

Even next morning, she met Esrom without alluding to their plighted vows. She was still in ecstacy with a Sabbath which, she said, had

been to her a fragment of the first Sabbath of Time, and a foretaste of the first Sabbath of Eternity. Esrom felt piqued, and asked, sarcastically, "Did Adam *pray* like the Elders, or will Angels *sing* like the choirs of Beersheba?" This association of ideas was ludicrous. It threw her off her guard: and, for the first time, Rachel *criticised* the tones and terms of public worship. Until that moment, she had thought of nothing, but their spirit and design: but, from that moment, she began to weigh them, not only in the balance of the sanctuary, but also in the scales of taste. They were "found wanting" in both; and she wondered that she had overlooked their defects so long. It was an unhappy discovery! She resolved to *improve* the form of her own devotions: for, hitherto, she had adopted whatever petition came *warm* from the lips of the Elders; and had thought only of what she wanted. Now, she began to think more about her words than her wants; and tried oftener to adore like a seraph, than to pray like a penitent. Sublimity

became her study. Humility was left to accident. She could trust her heart, (she said to herself,) that it would never relapse into hardness or coldness. It had been melted and warmed by the holy fire of Heaven; and she took for granted, that the glow would never decay. Surely the principle of grace might be as safely trusted to its own vitality, upon the altar of the soul, as the sacred fire upon the altar of the temple! She, at least, was sure that, after what she had seen and felt herself to be as a sinner, nothing could inflate or deaden her spirit as a penitent.

She thus trusted her own heart; and it betrayed her! It soon took more interest in her *nuptial* preparations, than in her closet, or in her copy of the Law. She was no longer humble before God. She never forgot "the Grapes of Gomorrah;" but she no longer *wept* when she remembered them. Her old ambition to dazzle or puzzle others in company, returned on her. She was upon the watch for opportunities to shine in conversation,

whenever Sheshbazzar was not present. She almost *claimed* credit for her piety from the Elders: for having lost much of the witness of her own spirit, she sought relief in the good opinion of others. But she oftener startled the Elders, than conciliated them, by her professions. Some doubted her sincerity, and others her orthodoxy; and she felt equally mortified by both. There was bitterness as well as truth; sarcasm as well as sorrow, in her lips, when she said of them, "that Angels were better judges of repentance." Sheshbazzar had thrown out the same hint to the Elders, but in another spirit. He smiled complacently, whilst he said to them, "You will soon be as glad as GABRIEL was, when he put Rachel's tears into the urn of heaven: he had seen none purer, since Hannah wept before the Lord in Shiloh." The Elders had said to him, "Her tears may be in your book, but they are not in His bottle yet." It was a harsh speech; and yet, they meant no harm. Rachel had long been a *mystery* to them; for although she never

spoke "as one of the foolish women." neither did she speak like the generality of the wise women. She was often more mystical than the woman of Tekoah, and more poetical than Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth. When she called the stars, sheckinahs in miniature, the old men thought her profane: when she said, the sun was an emblem and a pledge, that the glory between the Cherubim would, one day, fill the whole earth, they deemed her insane, or too partial to the Gentiles: and when she doubted *their* interpretation, of both the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and the hatred of Esau, by God, they almost charged her with blasphemy. Thus it was not wonderful, that they were but slow of heart to believe her to be a daughter of the Covenant. Her speech, they said truly, "was hardly the language of Canaan;" for it was never much according to the *shibboleth* of the wise, nor the *sibboleth* of the weak; and now it was less so than ever. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh;" and Rachel's heart abounded now

with tastes, emotions, and aspirations, which *sober* truth could not satisfy, nor ordinary teachers please. When Sheshbazzar was not in the synagogue, she often stayed at home on the Sabbath. She could get "no good," she said, "from the common-place of the *dry* Elders, nor from the whining of the *weeping* Elders, nor from the thundering of the *fiery* Elders. Merab was too controversial; Jeduthun, too legal; Jubal, too declamatory; and Hamath, too hasty. Except, therefore, when Sheshbazzar spoke, Rachel hardly listened. She preferred her own "worldless thoughts," she said, "to their unthoughtful and low words."

Esrom ministered to this fastidious taste. She herself had never thought of bringing the *prayers* of the Elders to its bar, until he obtruded them upon her notice. Her own spirit had long been too devotional, to weigh the words or notice the tones of those who led the synagogue of the people to the THRONE of Jehovah. Even when the Elders who had wounded her lifted up their hands in prayer, her

heart, whilst simple, forgot all their faults and defects, and felt only that God was listening!

Sheshbazzar had often said to her, "Remember; God only is addressed in prayer. You are no longer a *hearer*, when His worship begins. You are then speaking unto the Lord; and what you have to say to Him, is too solemn to depend upon words or tones. Let your *heart* pray for mercy and grace; and it will ascend to heaven like Manoah's angel in the flame of the sacrifice, even if the altar be an *unhewn* rock."

In the sun of such sentiments Rachel's devotional spirit had ripened; and, until Esrom blighted it, by criticising the prayers of the Elders, nothing that they were as men, or had said as judges, had even tarnished the *bloom* of her devotional simplicity. Or as Sheshbazzar had often expressed it,—place her only before the Throne, and her heart is a harp which will yield melody unto the Lord, at the touch of any "holy hands," whether laic or levitical.

Such it had been, whilst Sheshbazzar was the depositary of all its secrets. Such he him-

self often found it, when he led the devotions of the Synagogue.—But ever since her betrothment, it had often been *untuned*. Her plans—her prospects—her arrangements, for the day when she should be brought to the house of Esrom, "in raiment of needlework; the virgins, her companions, following with gladness and rejoicing," had more than divided her heart, even in the closet; and, in the Synagogue, they often diverted it from both the Word and Worship of Jehovah. Sheshbazzar did not suspect this. He saw, indeed, that Rachel's preparations were upon a scale worthy of her Tribe and her parentage; and that her own *taste* would preside over every thing—from her own robes, to the veils of her maidens, and even down to the lamps and torches of the procession. But why not? Who had such exquisite taste? "Rachel is, indeed, troubled about many things," said the old man; "but her good sense is a pledge that nothing will be extravagant or vain. She is sure to adorn herself and others, only according to the manner

of holy women of old. There may be 'nets of checker-work and wreaths of chain-work" here and there in her arrangements, as around the pillars of the temple; but the crown of the whole, like the capitals of Jachin and Boaz, and the borders of the molten Sea, will be '*lily work*;' the still grandeur of gracefulness, the calm majesty of meekness; as from the chisel of Hiram of Tyre."

Sheshbazzar did not know that Rachel had *plunged* into the bustle of preparation, in order to forget her penitential vows, and to hide from herself the backslidings of her own heart. And, had her heart still been what he supposed, he would have been more than justified in taking for granted, that she would plan and execute all things as in the sight of God. For, until Esrom's critical levity betrayed her devotional spirit, she could turn any series of domestic duties into a Bethel Ladder between earth and heaven. But, when she became a critic in the house of prayer, she soon lost her simplicity in the closet. At first, she was shocked on discovering, that unhallowed associations of the

ludicrous or frivolous, were blending themselves with phrases which once breathed her holiest feelings. Then, she could not use, in the closet, expressions she had blamed, or smiled at, in the Synagogue. Then, she sat musing in silence *about* prayer, instead of kneeling before the Lord with supplication. At length, she became equally ashamed and afraid to be *alone* with God!

Thus Rachel's heart condemned her, and to escape from its censures, she filled her hands, to overflowing, with the duties of her betrothment; leaving neither time nor thought for any thing beyond the ceremonials of religion. She fasted without humility, and worshipped without love, except when Sheshbazzar presided. And even then, he was often to her, only "as one that playeth well upon an instrument."

All this process and result of spiritual defection, she concealed from him. She tried to persuade herself that, like the cloud which had occasionally come over her spirit, before she knew the Lord; and which, when it passed off, left her more cheerful than it had found her;

so this hiding of the Divine presence would only be temporary, and enhance the brightness of the Candle of the Lord, when it should shine upon her *own* tabernacle :—for she had vowed, that the house of Esrom and Rachel should be in all things "the tabernacle of the righteous," whenever she entered upon its management. In *its* closet, she was sure to renew her communion with God !—at *its* family Altar, sure to pray in the spirit ? by *its* hearth in the evening, and under its fig-tree in the morning, sure to shake off from Esrom and herself, all the mildew of backsliding ! Nothing of this, however, was attempted in the mean time. All improvement, and penitence too, was postponed until Sheshbazzar should "sanctify the household" of the betrothed, upon his return from Jerusalem. But, before he returned, Rachel was become "A LEPER, *white as snow !*"

No symptoms of this awful malady had shown itself, when Sheshbazzar left Beersheba. He had marked the throb of her veins, and felt her hand burn, and seen the hectic flush

and the pallid hue succeed each other on her cheek, without increasing or diminishing the strange glaze of her eyes: but he dreamt not of leprosy. There was no "bright spot in the skin," and no "whiteness in the hair;" and thus, although he parted from her with a heavy heart, it was *mental*, not bodily, disease he foreboded: and that fear, he was too wise to utter or betray. He blessed Rachel, in the name of the Lord, and placed himself as usual at the head of his brethren, to conduct them to Zion.

Sheshbazzar exemplified, at Jerusalem, the spirit of his favourite maxim: he shook the mulberry-trees of every typical ordinance, and prophetic promise. He was the first, daily, at the morning sacrifice, and the last to retire from the evening sacrifice: the first at the altar of burnt-offering, and the last at the altar of incense. When the Levites walked in procession around the altars, waving the palms of Judah, and sounding the silver trumpets of the GREAT HOSANNA, no vocal Hosanna, amongst the thousands of Israel, swelled above Shesh-

bazzar's. Like the eagle moulting upon the summits of Gerrizzim, the old man seemed to renew his youth, whilst thus waiting upon the God of his fathers in Zion. When his fellow-pilgrims could distinguish him in the great congregation, or at the waters of Siloa, they saw, from his looks, that he was shaking the mulberry-trees, and like the fleece of Gideon, was saturated with the dew of heaven.

When the *Iom Hacchipurim* ended, they prepared to return to Beersheba; and Sheshbazzar was, as usual, their guiding pillar in the wilderness. "We have been, my children, like the spies," he said, "searching the land of promise: what have we to show at home as the *fruit* of it? Grapes, or wild gourds? Not the latter, I am quite sure! But, have we cut such a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol, as to require 'two men to carry it between them on a staff?' Or have we merely an untimely fig, and an unripe pomegranate, hanging at our girdle? We ought not to carry home a bad report of the goodly land. There were large and

ripe clusters on Mount Zion: what can we show as the fruit of it? A spirit, meek as the lily of the valley, fragrant as the rose of Sharon, and pure as the waters of Siloa? It ought to be so. Those who tarried at home will expect to divide the spoil with us. Esrom and Rachel, especially, will look to me for the first ripe fruits. Gleanings will not satisfy them." Thus he talked by the way.

"But who is this—that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?" It was Rachel, now a leper, white as snow, leaning on Esrom. The pilgrims shrunk back, and stood afar off. They were ready to exclaim, "God has rejected her, although you vouched for her." Sheshbazzar turned to them with the majesty of an angel, saying, "There is hope in Israel concerning this thing. It is of the Lord; but it is for good, as in the case of MIRIAM." Turning to Rachel, with the mildness of an angel, he said, "Though you have lain among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."

No. 11.

VARIETIES FROM OVERSIGHT.

It is quite possible to have a sincere desire to be holy, and even to have some real love to holiness, and yet to overlook, not only some of the virtues or graces of a holy character, but also some of the most effectual means of becoming holy. A very great point is gained, however, when even *one* evangelical motive to holiness acquires, either as a check or as a charm, sanctifying influence over our character. And, happily, the motive or consideration which first lays hold upon the conscience is, usually, the solemn fact, that "without Holiness no one shall see the Lord." This is a consideration which may well awe and influence both our habits and spirit: and therefore, it is well that it is, in general, the first to rivet our attention.

Perhaps no other motive is so well suited, at first, to our condition, when we are just setting out in the Divine life. It is readily understood, and easily remembered. And as it is the *fear* of not seeing God in heaven at last, quite as much as the *desire* of seeing Him, that influences our choice, we really need a motive which can work, at once upon both our hopes and fears; for one that appealed to either exclusively, would defeat itself then. An increase of fear without hope, or of hope without any fear, would do us no real good.

I do, therefore, congratulate you upon the hold which this familiar, but powerful motive, has obtained upon your understanding and conscience. Its authority over you is a good sign. It is, indeed, no small proof of being "led by the Spirit:" for as many as have been led by Him, began to follow holiness, because, "without" it, "no man shall see the Lord." It is, however, worthy of special attention, that all who have ever made any great progress in following holiness, have had to try the force of other

motives. Indeed, they have found it *necessary* to do so; on finding that this one did not carry them far enough, or not so far as it did at first

This is only what might be expected. No *single* motive, however sweet or solemn, can be equally influential at all times, or in all duties. Our circumstances change; and we change with them, not a little. Our best frames of mind too, are not permanent. Even our "first love," although it has not "waxed cold" exactly, has lost much of its original simplicity and tenderness. We are not so susceptible or watchful in all things now, as when we first said to ourselves, whilst weeping at the foot of the Cross, "Without holiness I shall not see the Lord." Then, all our old regrets, and all our new desires, and all our hopes and fears for Eternity, threw light upon the meaning of Holiness, and warmth into the resolution to follow it, through good report and bad report. Thus the maxim was mighty, whilst we were melted with the wonders of redeeming love, and awed by the solemnities of eternity.

Now, we recollect this well. We cannot forget it. Accordingly, whenever we so fall off from the rule or the spirit of holiness, as to be startled at the declension, or to become afraid of consequences, we naturally say to ourselves, "Ah, this is the sad effect of losing my first love. Could I only recall the days of old, when my heart was all tenderness, and my conscience all timidity, I should find my old maxim as powerful and sufficient as ever." We have not a doubt of this. We are quite sure, that we should soon act as well as ever, if we could only *feel* again as we did at first. And there can be no doubt, that a renewed sense of redeeming love and of eternal things, would give great practical power to the command, "Follow holiness; without which no one shall see the Lord." The real question is, however, how to get back that state of mind? It does not return of itself, nor is it always found even when sought for with tears. Something good is, indeed, always found in answer to fervent prayer: but it is not often that even

such prayer brings back all the light and love of the days of old. Even when it does, they are not such *long* days as they were at first, nor do they follow each other in such *close* succession.

You have observed and deplored all this. Did it ever occur to you, that there is no small danger of grieving the Holy Spirit, by thus making "the days of old," the *standard* for our present piety? The "good work" in the heart, of which He is the author and finisher, he "*carries on*" in its goodness, as well as keeps up in its being. Its mere *preservation* from utter extinction is not his great object. His care over "the root of the matter," is for the sake of the fruit it is capable of bearing. Accordingly, whenever we become less fruitful, or even cease trying to bring forth more fruit than we began with, He soon makes us to feel somewhat doubtful as to the very *life* of the root itself. Indeed, we are any thing but sure that the root of the matter is in us at all, when the branches of our profession become very

barren. They will not, and cannot, be very fruitful, however, if we grieve the Holy Spirit, by neglecting or overlooking any of the *great motives* which he employs for sanctification.

Now, although the solemn consideration which I have been commending so strongly, is one of them, and a motive never to be laid aside or lost sight of, it is not the *chief* motive by which the Spirit works. He generally begins with it; but He never ends with it. And this is only what might be expected: for His special office is to *glorify* Christ. He will not, therefore, keep up the sanctifying power of any motive, however good, which is allowed to take that place in our attention, which belongs to the Saviour. Now, it is by the glory of Christ, as that shines in the glass of Revelation, that the Holy Spirit changes believers into the image of Christ. They are all predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Saviour: and as the Spirit will not depart from that *model*, neither will he deviate from this *mode* of sanctification. It will be just as true until the

end of time, as it was at the beginning of Christianity, that it is by "beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," that we are changed into the same image, by the Lord the Spirit. He will, indeed, give law its place, and chastisement its place, and both promises and warnings their place, in making us partakers of the Divine holiness: but He will not allow one of them, nor even the whole of them, to *displace* the Saviour. He will make Him all in all, in the midst of all the means by which He sanctifies our heart and character.

Now, even if we meant well in trying to be holy, on the strength of the *one* motive which first struck us, it is no wonder that its original influence has not kept up as it began. The Holy Spirit will not permit even the holy fear of not "seeing the Lord" at last, to exempt us from the duty of contemplating "the glory of the Lord" now.

It may suit our sloth, or our convenience, or our self-complacency, to take for granted that

we can go on very well in following Holiness, by remembering its *necessity* as meetness for heaven: but this does not suit the glory of Christ; and, therefore, the Spirit will not work long, nor witness much, with this single fact, solemn as it is. By some process of conviction or chastisement, He will compel us to look sharply and seriously about us, for something more than a vague fear of hell, or a faint hope of heaven, as the means of sanctification. In a word, CHRIST must be "made unto us sanctification," as well as "wisdom, righteousness, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30.

Does this throw any light upon your case? You have both wondered and wept, because you have often found yourself going *back*, rather than forward, in piety; although you were not conscious of having given up or lost sight of any of the holy motives you began with. You have never changed your opinion of the beauty of holiness, nor lost your conviction of its necessity; and yet neither your opinion nor your persuasion has kept you up to the *mark* of your

first efforts, in running the race set before you. You "did run well," when you began to follow holiness; but you have often slackened your pace, and even slumbered by the way. "What did hinder you?" for you did not intend to stop, nor expect to tire, nor did you even imagine that you could "weary in well doing."

Now, any one can tell you, or you can easily tell yourself, in explanation of this falling off, that you allowed some wrong habit or temper to grow upon you, or took up unduly with some earthly comfort, and thus grieved the Holy Spirit. And there is but too much truth in this account. It is not, however, the true explanation of your declensions. It is, in fact, itself, a *part* of your falling off, and not the real cause of it. That lay, in not "looking unto Jesus as the Author and Finisher" of your holiness, as well as of your faith. You ran, even whilst you "did run well," looking to Him for righteousness, far more than for sanctification. You did not, indeed, *overlook* either His image or His example; but they had obtained from you

nothing like the same degree of attention, which you gave to His atonement and intercession. For once that you have tried to cast yourself into "the mould" of his image, you have cast yourself a thousand times upon His merits and grace. Not, however, that you have done the latter too often. No, indeed! Nor can you ever do it too often. But you have done the former too seldom, or too slightly. So, alas, have I!

Here, then, is the real cause of declension in piety; our leading fault and our chief defect are not confronted with the image of Christ from day to day, but left to the mere restraint of ordinary motives; and, as these are hardly sufficient to sustain even what is best and strongest in our character, it is no wonder that what is worst and weakest grows upon us, and thus brings the very spirit of piety to a low ebb. In a word; our besetting sin cannot be overcome, nor our weak side cured, by leaving them to take their chance, in common with those points of our character which are easily kept.

right. What is bad cannot be remedied, by the force of the general considerations which support what is good about us ; any more than food can heal a wound, or clothing cure a fever. It is *medicine*, not food, that cures bodily disease : and it is the special, not the general motives to holiness, that can alone remove moral defects.

It is, I am aware, much more common, in speaking on this subject, to hear it said of our chief faults and defects, " This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." And this is perfectly true, if the maxim be taken (as the Saviour intended it to be) always in connexion with learning of Him, and setting His image and example before us. Apart from doing that, however, even special prayer, and literal fasting, will not " cast out" a wrong habit nor a rash spirit, effectually. Accordingly, we have prayed, at times, very fervently, against the tendencies and temptations which betray us oftenest ; and yet we have been soon betrayed by them again. Indeed, it has not always been from the want of *trying* to stand, that we have

so often fallen. Others may say so, and even think so, when they see us falling away from some duty, or falling into some wrong spirit: but we knew the contrary. We have not, alas, "done all to stand," which we might have done: but we have done more than others give us credit for at times, and suffered more too than they imagine. Any one can see our faults: but God alone knows our struggles against them.

Well; the great reason why these struggles are so unsuccessful often, is, that we pray and plan without having the image of Christ distinctly before us, or without looking chiefly to that feature of His image which is most imperfectly reflected by us; for we can no more steer a right course through the sea of life by *any* star of the Saviour's character, than the mariner can steer through the ocean by any star of the skies. We must look oftenest to that part of the image of Christ, which we are most unlike. And this must be done "with open face;" or with an honest desire and express

determination, to be "changed into the same image."

Here, now, comes on the trial of our spirit, and of our integrity too. Are we willing to learn a *new* lesson; willing to try a *new* experiment; willing to make a *new* effort, in order to be more holy? Nothing else or less than this, can cure the faults and imperfections we confess and deplore. Well; whether will you go on confessing and deploring them, or set yourself to contemplate the glory of Christ in the glass of Revelation, that that part of His glory which reproves them, may disperse them also? Would you rather succumb to them, than conquer them at this expense of time and thought? Would you rather give the time thus called for, to prayer for the forgiveness of them, than to meditation for their removal? Would you rather throw them on the blood of Christ for pardon, than upon the image of Christ for sanctification?

These questions are bringing out the *secrets* of your heart, upon the very surface of your

conscience! Take great care, however, th
the discoveries you are now making of "wh
is in" you, neither discourage you too muc
nor irritate you at all: for it is as possible
dispute as to despond, when the unexpect
discovery of some great *oversight* in religi
forces home upon us the conviction, that w
have almost to begin anew, or, at least, to ta
new lessons on sanctification. We do n
like to see the necessity of thus going to *sch*
again as meekly and humbly, as when we fi
sat down at the feet of Christ, saying wi
child-like simplicity, "Lord, what wouldst th
have me to do?" Some, when they find th
it must come to this, begin to doubt whetl
all their past experience has not been a de
sion; and others allow themselves to be chaf
into an impatient or speculative spirit, whi
tries to rid itself of the conviction, that n
lessons and measures are thus indispensab
Thus, just according to the frame of our mi
at the moment of this humiliating discovery,
the effect of the discovery itself. If we happ

to be rather well pleased with the state of our piety upon the whole, we are in great danger of straining our ingenuity, to prove that we are doing pretty well, without studying the image of Christ more than usual. If, again, we happen to be in Doubting Castle, when this great oversight flashes upon our spirit, we are but too ready to put our "feet into the stocks" of utter despondency, or to conclude that we were never converted nor sincere. And, if we happen to be in a slothful or worldly temper, when we are brought to a dead stand by the startling fact, that we have never been so intent on having the image of Christ upon our soul, as the Righteousness of Christ upon our sins; then Satan is sure to set our wits to work, to find out some way of evading the new duty, without exactly denying the necessity of more holiness.

I need not tell you that, in this case, the *compromising* spirit is the most dangerous. The fainting spirit, though painful, is not perilous. God will take care to revive it, and to

enable it to look again towards His holy temple: but, "with the froward, He will show himself froward," and by some means take "vengeance on their inventions." He will *drive* us by rods to the image of Christ, if we do not follow the leadings of His Spirit to the glass of Revelation; just as He drives us back to the Cross of Christ, when we forsake, or stand too far off from it.

How, then, do you feel inclined towards the duty and habit of "beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, that you may be *changed into his image?*" You have contemplated His glory, that you might be pardoned and accepted. You cannot afford, and you do not wish, to take your eye off from the glory of His power, which can save to the uttermost; nor from the glory of His blood, which can cleanse from all sin; nor from the glory of His righteousness, which can justify even the ungodly when they believe; nor from the glory of His grace, which is sufficient for all emergencies; nor from the glory of His inter-

cession, which the Father heareth always with complacency; nor from the glory of His providence, which maketh all things work together for good to them who love him. In reference to all these features of the Saviour's personal and official glory, you desire "to see Jesus," and neither dread nor deprecate any evil so much, as that of any "veil upon your heart," which would hide this brightness of His glory from your eye, or hide your need of it from your conscience. Thus, Creation would be a blank to you, if you were to lose sight of the glory of Christ. Your brightest hope, yea, your fondest desire, even in regard to Heaven itself, is, "to see Him as he is." You expect far more happiness from "beholding the glory of the Lamb in the midst of the throne," than from all the unveiled scenes and secrets of the natural and moral universe. You can easily conceive how you will never weary through Eternity in looking up to Him, saying, "I beseech thee show me thy glory:" for you know that it is *infinite;* and, therefore, that every

new form of it can only be the harginge still newer and nobler manifestations "w Immortality endures." There! I knew you would feel upon this point. The "me of your heart" is now quivering upon lips, and smiles of complacency playing an the sweet words,

> "There shall we see His face,
> And never, never sin:
> And from the rivers of His grace,
> Drink endless pleasures in!"

O, *you* are not the woman, who shoul afraid that the image of Christ cannot be pressed upon your heart and character! have no occasion to despond or dispute, in presence of a new lesson. You cannot *do* without it, now that both the Providence the Spirit of God have thus forced it u your notice. Any attempt to do without it r would be such a sin against light; and, in case and mine, such an outrage upon science and reason, that we could look

nothing else than to be left to fall into some fatal error or apostacy, if we were not, from henceforth, to follow Holiness, looking to the image of Christ, as our chief model and motive.

Our Bible, remember, brings this view of Holiness before us, in a very peculiar and solemn connexion: and we have no right, whatever be our views or feelings towards the word, "Predestination," to separate it from that word; for God has joined them together thus: "for whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. viii. 29. The necessity of this conformity, or likeness, to the mind and moral character of the Saviour, is not a thing to be evaded, by proving or disproving the Calvinistic system. The Arminian and the Calvinist must equally admit that whatever Predestination mean, no one is "predestinated," but for a holy purpose. Both the calling and election taught in the Bible, is "unto holiness."

I have, perhaps, less patience with the *vulgar* notions of Predestination than many. Indeed, I do not believe one word of any theory of sovereignty, the letter and spirit of which is not in perfect harmony with that sacred oracle, "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ." 1 Pet. i. 2. Whether, therefore, I take "predestinate" in the sense of purpose, decree, determination, or design, I cannot help seeing the sober fact, that God never could "predestinate" one class of His children to be very *like* Christ, and another to be very *unlike* Christ. Common sense revolts from the gross absurdity, that some are chosen to be holy, and others to be nearly unholy; that one is predestinated to be active, and another to be idle; that a few are elected to be amiable, and many to be waspish or peevish. No meaning of the word "predestinate," will agree with such anomalies. Now, although I certainly do not see any thing in the Bible, which conveys the

shadow of an idea, that we are chosen or called *because* of any personal holiness, still, I cannot but see, that all predestination, as taught by Christ and his apostles, is, invariably and expressly, in *order* to produce holiness of heart and life.

Now, in what do you fail most? What grace or virtue of a holy character do you find most difficult to acquire and keep up? Perhaps, a *devotional spirit:* that grace which is the guardian of all the rest! If this be the point in which you fail chiefly, you certainly do not fail through ignorance of its importance; for on no point have you more knowledge, or deeper convictions. I mean, you can neither forget nor doubt the connexion between prayerfulness, and all growth in grace. You are quite sure that you could neither gain more ground in piety, nor even keep your present ground long, if you were to give up secret prayer. You see, at a glance, how the utter loss of a devotional spirit, would involve the certain loss of all hope, and place even the best points of your

character in imminent peril. It is not, therefore, from any doubt of the inseparable connexion between a devotional spirit, and soul-prosperity, that you ever become formal or heartless in your closet. You may try to persuade yourself at times, that *less* prayer will answer the purpose of keeping up both your hope and consistency; but you never imagine that they can be maintained without any prayer. Or, if at any time there be *no* prayer, it is because, for the moment, you have "no hope."

Here, then, is an informed judgment—a persuaded conscience—a feeling heart, upon the indispensable necessity of a devotional spirit: and yet, you weary of your closet at times, and are often reluctant to go to it, as well as lifeless in it. Thus, it is not from the want of knowing better, that you either weary or decline in secret prayer. Your convictions of the sin and danger of neglecting your closet, are often strongest when you are most estranged from it. I mean, you are sometimes obliged to shut your eyes when passing it, or hurrying

out of it; the *glare* of that guiltiness is so blinding and painful! You cannot bear to *think*, at that moment. And yet, even then, you intend, yea, vow to yourself, to shake off this lethargy; to break through this reluctance; and to return soon to your "quiet rest" under the mercy-seat; for you never depart from it in disgust, nor allow yourself to be drawn away from it, without leaving at it the promise of a speedy return. Thus, even when farthest off from the throne of grace, you are rather a *wanderer* than a deserter.

Has there been *much* of this wandering backward and forward between God and the world, in your past history? Do your still find it very difficult to continue "instant (persevering) in prayer?" Is the disposition to wander rather on the *increase*, than the decrease?" Do you "quit the horns of the Altar" oftener, or *longer* at one time, than formerly? If so, see the need you have to get hold of some *new* motive, which may both rally the relaxed power of your old motives, and render it impossible for

you to fail or faint so much in prayer. Why; without this, you may come to "restrain prayer before God" altogether; and then, what can restrain you from utter apostacy?

You feel this. Well; there is a *glory* in the INTERCESSION of Christ in heaven, which cannot fail, if duly contemplated, to transform you into the image of His devotional spirit on earth. Its sweet influence cannot be resisted nor defeated, in any heart that has ever found relief in prayer, or that yet feels the necessity of prayer. The glory of the Saviour's intercession *will* change that heart into more of the image of His heart, than any other motive which can be employed for the revival, or the confirmation, of a devotional spirit.

In asserting this, thus strongly, nothing is farther from my design than to convey any idea of a charm, an impulse, or an influence, which would make devotion as natural and easy, as it is essential. I know of no *spell* on earth, or from heaven, which could keep up the spirit of prayer, apart from "watching unto prayer."

Whoever will not take time, and heed, and care, in order to maintain devotional habits, will find no substitute for them, in sentimental impulses, or in extatic reveries. Prayer is a sober and solemn *duty*, as well as a sublime privilege; and, therefore, the duty must be performed, if the privilege would be enjoyed.

The glory of the Saviour's intercession in heaven, can, however, confirm the habit, and prolong the spirit of prayer. You may have said to yourself, without much effect,

> "Cold mountains and the midnight air,
> Witness'd the fervour of His prayer."

You may only have been afraid or ashamed when you thought of Him, as "rising a great while before day," or as "continuing all night alone," in prayer. You may only have felt reproved when you remembered how He "prayed more earnestly," as his agony in Gethsemane increased. Thus, whilst beholding all this in the glass of the Saviour's history, your heart may have only shrunk back from

the sight, alarmed or humbled: not un
to pray; but unable to see how such
could be imitated, the time of it was s
and the intensity so great, and the soli
awful! And His special prayers are only
ples for special emergencies: not *specia*
daily or ordinary devotion. Accordingl
long and lonely seasons of prayer, we
frequent even in His close walk and
munion with God. It was only in His
that he kneeled down "three times"
night. It was only just before or after
great steps in His public mission and m
that he spent *whole* nights alone in
The tenor of His devotional habits, fr
to day, presented nothing to astonish
courage his disciples. Accordingly, the
gelists relate only His *extraordinary* su
tions, and never intimate that there w
thing inimitable or impracticable in hi
devotions.

These distinctions are too seldom
when the Saviour is held up as an exa

prayer: and thus both the charm and the check of his example are sadly defeated; for we see, although we do not like to say it, that the remarkable specimens of His devotion are impracticable rules, under *ordinary* circumstances. Accordingly, they are only complimented or admired: that is all,—except when we can do nothing but pray.

You have not less need to contemplate the glory of the Saviour's intercession in heaven, because you have now clearer ideas of his example on earth. Indeed, if the latter commend itself to your understanding and heart more than you expected it ever could do; and if you now see more in it than you did before, you may well conclude that the latter is worth studying, and likely to be still more useful.

Do not withdraw your attention, nor doubt this, because you remember all the texts which prove and illustrate the Intercession of Christ. I have, of course, nothing to tell you, but just what they contain: or rather, only what I see in them; which is far less than their full im-

port. It will, however, be their true import, so far as it goes; if an "unveiled face" be any security against error or fancy. I have bared my face to the utmost, as well as bowed my knees, before "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would strengthen me with might by his Spirit, in the inner man, and thus enable me to comprehend something of the breadth and length, the height and depth of the love of Christ," as the ever-living, never-wearying Intercessor before the throne! I have implored for this grace, not so much in order that I may be able to write on the subject, as that the Interceding Love of Christ may "constrain me to *abide* in the secret place of the most High."

Now, this is just what you want;—to be kept prayerful on earth, until you are ready for the harp of praise in heaven. Well; it is just as true, that you cannot be "saved from wrath" but by the interceding LIFE of Christ, as that you cannot be "justified," but by the atoning death of Christ. It is because He ever liveth to make Intercession, that "he is able to

save to the uttermost (or completely) them that come unto God by him." Heb. vii. 25. Thus, His continuing to *intercede*, and our continuing to *come* unto God by him, are inseparably connected with the perfection or completion of our salvation.

This deserves special attention. Some speak as if they thought, that Justification from the condemning sentence of the Law completed, or at least made *sure*, their salvation. Paul, however, speaks very differently on this point. He avows the need, as well as triumphs in the prospect, of being "saved from wrath," through the life of Christ, even after having been justified by the death of Christ. Hear the Apostle; and shut your ears to "the instruction which causeth to err!" "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from WRATH by him." Why? How? "For if, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much

more, being reconciled, we shall be SAVED by his *life*." Rom. v. 8—10. Thus, the "reconciled," yea, the "justified," need to be "saved from wrath," by the Life of Christ, even after His death has fully and for ever delivered them from the curse of the Law. And for an obvious reason: the Law is not the *only* thing we have broken and violated. Our sins against the Gospel, in trifling with it so long; and against the Holy Spirit, in grieving him so much; and against Providence, in improving it so little; and against the Saviour himself, in loving him and glorifying him so partially: these sins deserve "*sorer punishment*" than even our transgressions against the moral law! Accordingly, Paul never represents the wrath of God as confined to sins against the Law. He says explicitly, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Rom. i. 18. And your own experience agrees with, and thus confirms, the Apostle's doctrine, on this subject. Your sins against GRACE, alarmed and humbled you more than

your sins against the Law. You may be able, by setting yourself to *reason* on general principles, to resolve all your sins into breaches of the Divine Law, as that is the general rule of the Divine government: but you *feel*, whenever your heart and conscience follow the convicting leadings of the spirit, that past neglect of Salvation, and present misimprovement of Grace, are your chief sins. And well you may reckon them so!

Now, although it be true (and a glorious truth it is) that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," whether against law or grace; it is not true that you have applied this glorious truth to yourself fully yet; or as God has revealed and intended it for your encouragement,—if you think *only* of the Sacrifice of Christ, when you remember these words. In the ORACLE of God, they stand inseparably connected with the Intercession of Christ also, and with our attention to it as well as to his Atonement. Look at this fact for yourself. 1 John i.

The subject of this Chapter is, fellowship or communion with God: the very thing we ought to desire and aim at in prayer; for it is in connexion with it, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin. Hence John says expressly, "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness," (persist in known and allowed sin,) "we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another," (with each other,) and (thus walking consistently and prayerfully) "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Now observe how John connects this cheering truth with the Intercession, as well as with the Atonement of Christ. ii. 1. Knowing but too well, from his own experience, that walking in the Light is not perfect, even when very conscientious upon the whole; and that sins do occur even with the devotional, the Apostle adds, "If any man sin, we have an ADVOCATE with the Father; Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is

the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Thus John connects "cleansing from all sin," just as Paul connects "deliverance from all wrath," with the Life of Christ as our advocate, as well as with the Death of Christ as our propitiation.

"Of the things which we have spoken, THIS IS THE SUM; we have such an High Priest, set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens:" an *interceding*, as well as an atoning Mediator; and our complete salvation from all sin and all wrath, depends upon applying to Him in both capacities.

Now you are somewhat prepared to contemplate the glory of the Saviour's Intercession: for you now see that it is as *essential* to your salvation, as His sacrifice! It is, in fact, the continued application of that sacrifice unto the soul, just as His crucifixion was the one offering of it to God. Thus He ever lives to bestow, what he once died to obtain. Or, as the old Divines express it, "whilst the *impetration* of

all the blessings of the covenant is by the death of Christ, the *application* of them is by the life of Christ."

I have (I fear) tried your patience, and even seemed tantalizing your expectations, by leading you thus round and round "the golden Altar" of Intercession, which is before the throne, without having once attempted to unveil its glories. I feel this, in common with you. It is not, however, lost time: for,—see how much better we understand and appreciate the Work of Christ in heaven! The idea of His appearing for us there, and praying for us there, if always pleasing, is now as momentous in importance, as it is pleasing in fact. We *feel* now, that the Intercession of Christ is a provision for more than our support and consolation, in the day of trouble: for more than our escape, in the hour of temptation; for more than purifying our prayers, by its "much incense." It is also and equally the provision of God, for the *continuance* of mercy to pardon sins against Grace; and for the continuance of the Spirit

to sanctify us, as well as to help our infirmities. Thus, we cannot regard it now, as merely a pleasing fact, which may be very useful in seasons of trial and temptation. Jesus "*ever liveth* to make Intercession for us;" because we for ever need both mercy and grace to our souls, whatever be the state of our health, our spirits, our temporal affairs, or even our piety: for when all these are in their "best estate," we can no more do without His intercession, than when they are in their lowest and worst estate.

It would have been of no permanent use, to have taken you to the Glass of Christ's interceding glory, before you had torn off from your face, and thrown away, those veils which hid from your sight, more than one half of your *need* of his prayers. The glory of his CENSER, like the glory of his CROSS, cannot be clearly seen, until the need of them be deeply felt. But now, it is as easy for you to behold it, as for me to show it. Indeed, you want no assistance from me, now that you stand "with open face," before the Mirror of revelation.

You cannot but see in that glass,—the glory of the Saviour's condescension, in thus *remembering* you for ever: the glory of His sympathy, in thus *pitying* you for ever: the glory of His patience, in thus *bearing* with you for ever: the glory of His love, in thus *praying* for you for ever: the glory of His holiness, in thus suing out for you, and carrying on in you, *conformity* to his own image! This, all this glory shines in His Intercession. And, that it is *transforming* glory, I appeal to your own heart at this moment: you are not unwilling to pray now. Your heart *is* praying! You will not shun the Mercy-seat to-night, nor hurry away from it.

Well; why not look at this glory of Christ, every morning and evening? Consider: you *must* think of something, if you would keep up the habit of coming to the throne of grace. You never do approach it without some motive or reason. Now the question is, what is the *best* motive? Happily, this is not a matter of opinion or conjecture. God has settled and

set forth the grand influential motive to regular prayer thus:—"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,—let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 14. "Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Heb. x. 19. The intercession of the Lamb slain is, you see, the chief *magnet* of the Mercy-seat. It is all very well, and even necessary, to remember from day to day, the *duty* of praying, and the *danger* of not praying, and the *profit* of prayer, and the *example* of the prayerful. You cannot have too many links between your heart and the throne of grace: but still, the link you need most, and which strengthens all the rest, is, the consideration, that the Intercessor as much expects you to bow regularly and reverentially at the throne of Grace,

as you expect and need Him to stand on your behalf before the throne of Glory.

Your attention must not be confined, however, even to the devotional image of the Saviour. Indeed, that cannot be copied successfully, if the soft and social features of His character are not imitated, and its pervading spirit studied.

Now, those who have minutely studied the character of the Saviour, (as the grand and lovely features of it were called forth during his abode in our world,) will find it difficult to determine whether there is most to *admire*, or to *imitate* in it—there is so much of both. Many features of his character are, indeed, inimitable in any degree. We can neither copy the authority of his omnipotence, nor imbibe the spirit of his omniscience: He must stand *alone* on the sea of Tiberias calming the tempest, and at the sepulchre of Bethany raising the dead, and thus tread all the field of miracles, as he trod the wine-press of the wrath of God; for, "of the people there can be none

with him." The Nathaniels must be content to pray under their fig-trees undiscovered by human eyes, and many may be devils at the sacramental table without being detected by the officiating minister; for the gift of "discerning spirits," and the power of working miracles, died with the Apostles, and resides now only in the person of Christ.

In the *higher* walks of his life, it is therefore equally useless and unnecessary to propose the example of the Saviour as a model for imitation, or as furnishing maxims for our conduct in life: there, we can only admire and adore, without the least hope of acquiring any resemblance to his miraculous excellencies. But far different is the state of the case, in regard to the VIRTUES of his character, and the *spirit* of his miracles: for our ordinary actions may be done in the temper of his mighty works, and the every-day duties of life and godliness may be discharged in the same disposition which led him to heal the sick and raise the dead. If, therefore, we cannot say

to our buried Lazaruses, "Come forth," we can cherish the tenderness which "wept" at the tomb. If we cannot rebuke fever in a house, we can soothe the family by sympathizing attentions. If we cannot turn water into wine, we can be thankful for a cup of cold water, and administer it in love, when we have nothing better to take or give: and thus have the *spirit*, although not the splendour of the Saviour's actions, running through and irradiating our own doings.

In regard to our relative duties, nothing *extraordinary* is expected from us. No bereaved mother looks to us for the restoration of her only son from the bier; nor any suffering friend for health: all that they calculate upon or expect is cordial sympathy and fervent prayer; so that the spirit of Christ's miracles will fully meet all relative desires.

Now, what was the spirit that distinguished the benevolent actions of the Saviour? Not ostentation—for he wished to hide some of his mightiest works: not partiality—for his kind-

ness was as general as it was generous: not caprice—for he was uniformly accessible to all ranks, and, like the sun, rose every day of his ministry upon the dark world, in light and warmth. His temper could be calculated upon to a certainty, at all times and under all circumstances; and those who had been charmed by his gracious words and gentle manners on the Mount of Olives, were sure, when they left his feet, to find on their return the same looks of love on his face, and the same law of kindness on his lips. So uniform was he in his whole character while on earth, that the apostolic boast was, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!"

Now the mild and lovely character of the Saviour may be, and ought to be, employed, both as an encouragement to come unto him for salvation, and as an example to be copied by all who have committed their souls into his hands.

It is an encouragement to apply to him for salvation. For it is not by the death of Christ

only that we learn his willingness to save unto the uttermost: *that*, indeed, places his good will towards man beyond all reasonable doubt, because no greater proof of it could be given than dying that we might live. Demonstration can go no farther; but the same conclusion may be fairly drawn from the uniform meekness and gentleness of his character: these form the steady day-light of his love to man, as his sufferings and death are that love "*shining in the greatness of its strength.*" Indeed, he intended the sweetness of his temper, and the suavity of his manners, to illustrate and exemplify both the genius of his Gospel, and the loving-kindness of God. Hence the explicit assurance. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also." We are therefore warranted to apply unto God and the Lamb, as freely as the mothers of Israel brought their infants to be blessed—as freely as the friends of the sick brought them to be healed—as freely as the publicans and sinners came to sit at Jesus' feet. And if we would not hesitate, were

he on earth, to present our infants to him for his blessing, we need not hesitate to venture our souls upon his atoning blood. His heart is as open to welcome now, as his arms were then.

"Give him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace."

But his character is intended also, and should be employed, as an example to copy. The meekness and gentleness of Christ are as binding in their practical authority, as they are encouraging in their benevolent aspect. They are not, however, so much imitated as they are admired; but rather complimented than copied. Indeed, there are heavy complaints and charges current against many of the avowed followers of Christ. It is thought and said, that in the present day they are not characterized by meekness nor gentleness. They ought to be like the cherubim upon the ancient mercy-seat; of the same metal and polish as the propitiatory which they stand upon; and, if in general they are not so, it is imperative on your sex, as well as

the pulpit, both to expose and improve the wrong *spirit* and the wrong *manners* of the age—tha. all who have been "cast in the mould of the Gospel" may be polished, as well as moulded. 1 Peter iii. 1, 6. Thus, as women were the first at the Sepulchre of Christ to see him alive, so they are chiefly charged to copy His meekness and gentleness, both for their own sake, and to win others.

Now (without joining issue with the sweeping charges just referred to) it must be acknowledged that some of the avowed followers of Christ are unamiable both in their spirit and deportment. Some of them are consequential and others capricious; some reserved, and other morose; some irritable and others peevish some rash, and others captious. These thing ought not to be. But still, whilst we deplo and condemn them as *unchristian*, we ought bear in mind how much *worse* the pers chargeable with them must have been if t had had no religion; for if they are disagr ble notwithstanding all the restraints of

science, they must have been *intolerable* without them. As a good man once said of his wife, when a neighbour wondered how he could bear her unhappy temper, "I keep thinking how much worse it would be if she had *no* grace." And the fact is, it is with some minds as with some fields—there are thorns and briers in them even after much pains has been taken to cultivate the soil; and, although this cannot be too deeply lamented, we must not forget what the soil would have been without cultivation.

It is not intended by these remarks, to palliate, or apologize for, wrong tempers, but simply to present the case in all its bearings and aspects. It ought, therefore, to be stated explicitly that it is the *difficulty* of conquering them, rather than reluctance to relinquish them which keeps so many serious persons in bondage to bad tempers. They have tried to overcome them, and failed; and, therefore, they are tempted to invent, or avail themselves of excuses for what seems, in their case, unconquerable. But the fallacy of these excuses is demonstrable,

and ought to be demonstrated to all professed Christians, that they may not have recourse to them, either openly or secretly.

Some excuse their bad tempers upon the plea that they are constitutional or natural. But, if this were a valid excuse for any wrong temper, it would be so for any vice, and might be employed to palliate lust, intemperance, and revenge; for the slaves of these vile passions find them equally *constitutional*,—if that could justify them. We ought, therefore, to be exceedingly cautious how we sanction a maxim which may be interpreted in behalf of *any* sin; for although we may want it only to excuse a failing, others may employ it to excuse a gross fault.

It is certain, however, that some temperaments are naturally sweeter than others, and that some persons, without any effort, can be both meeker and gentler than others who make great efforts to "rule their spirit." Immense differences, in this respect, are discernible in the same family, and show themselves in chil-

dren, before temper can be an *acquired* habit of the mind. Now this obvious truth may be allowed to have all the weight, both as fact and argument, which any one, who has not a *selfish* purpose to answer, can desire; but what then? If the natural temper of my mind be irritable, or peevish, or capricious, the Gospel is able, and intended to subdue it,—*demands* its subjugation to "the mind of Christ;" *insists* upon it as an essential part of Christian character. Unless, therefore, I watch and pray against the besetting sin of my spirit, either my professed allegiance to Christ is mere pretence, whatever reliance upon him I may avow; or if it be not, I am preparing for myself, like Rachel, some "vengeance on my inventions," which may be as trying, if not so startling, as her leprosy.

ALLEGORY. No. 2.

RACHEL'S EXILE.

FROM the moment that the leprosy fell upon Rachel like snow on Lebanon, the *moral* leprosy of her spirit began to melt and pass away, like snow from the golden pinnacles of the Temple. Like Miriam, the sister of Moses, she understood and bowed to the rebuke of Jehovah at once. Whilst Esrom only exclaimed with Job, "Show me wherefore Thou contendest with me," Rachel meekly said, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, for I have sinned against him. There is no need, ESROM, that God should speak from the whirlwind, in order to explain this visitation. It explains itself in a loud voice; and that, not from the '*secret place* of thunder.' It is vengeance on our inventions!" Esrom then felt that he

been the leader in these inventions; and thus, that he was the chief cause, although not the chief victim, of the vengeance. He, therefore, resolved at once to brave all the consequences of watching over Rachel, during her banishment into the Beershebean wilderness. He would have borne her leprosy itself, could he have removed it from her to himself. He did what he could. He pitched her tent in the wilderness, with his own hands, under the shadow of a great rock, and close to a well of living water. He strewed it with the myrrh of Carmel, and the camphire of Engedi. He placed in it the vessel with which he had drawn water from the fountain of Siloam, when he first appeared before God in Zion. Skins, also, of the wild goats of Bether, and of the rams of Nebaioth, were in it for a couch; parched corn and grapes for food. And in its recess, under a vase of lilies of the valley, he placed her little ark of Gopher-wood, in which her ancestral copy of the Law was deposited. He had saved that treasure, on the day when the Elders pro-

nounced the house of her fathers unclean, and whilst the people were razing it to the ground.

Nothing gratified Rachel so much, as this attention. That ark contained the covenant of her God, and her own covenant with Esrom; for the deed of her betrothment lay beneath her Pentateuch and Psalter. She did not forget her ark on the day of her exile from her father's house; but she was afraid to bring it away under the veil of her leprosy. She felt, as if its sacred contents would be less dishonoured by perishing in the ruins of her habitation, than by escaping in the shadow of her shame. She was even afraid to name it to Esrom; and he was too considerate to name it to her. Rachel had never wept during her calamity. Her eyes burned like coals of juniper in a furnace of brass; not like dew-stars in the firmament. Esrom hoped that nature, as well as grace, would find relief, by the *surprise* he had prepared for them, in the little sanctuary in the wilderness. He judged aright. She entered the tent leaning upon his arm. Its coolness

did not revive her, nor its fragrance soothe her: but when her eye fell upon her Ark, her spirit melted. Rachel wept. Esrom blessed the God of his fathers, in silence. It was a holy hour! Angels heard each of them say unto God, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments." THE ANGEL OF THE COVENANT heard each of them cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

It was evening: and this was their evening sacrifice. When it closed, Esrom said, "'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, He will not despise,' whoever else may do so." With this salutation, Esrom left the tent; and, having wrapped himself in the skin of a young lion, which had perished in the swellings of Jordan, he ascended the great rock above the tent, to keep watch during the night. He watched "unto prayer," also. So did Rachel. Neither slumbered nor

157690

slept. Both prayed as in the days of old Neither remembered the Elders, except tc ponder, how men of *one* idea may have *mucl* devotion.

When Esrom entered the tent in the morn ing, he found Rachel still a leper; but the un natural brightness of her eyes had been softenec by her tears, and the dry and deathly coldnes of her hand was moderated. She had just de posited the Covenant in her ark, and replacec the vase of lilies upon it,—so arranged, that thei broad leaves, like wings, overshadowed it.

"The emblem is but too true, Esrom," sh said: "the leaves of the frailest of the flower of the field, not the wings of the CHERUBIM have overshadowed my ark. I rather *gar landed* than guarded it; and, therefore, th glory departed. Will that glory ever return I have read the Covenant of Promise thi morning, with relish: shall I ever read it agai with hope? Will my present penitence be a fading as the lilies of the valley?"

Esrom had not anticipated this applicatio

of his device. He had placed the flower she loved most, upon the ark she deemed lost; that pleasure might soften her surprise, when she found it again. "I meant no moral, Rachel," he said, "when I set the vase of lilies upon the lid of the ark." But Sheshbazzar would say,—"The *root* of them will not die, when their leaves wither, and their fragrance passes away. Their root is still in the valley, and will continue to yield flowers in its season, whilst it continues in its native soil. Let us keep our spirit in the *valley;* and we shall not only grow as the lily, but cast forth our roots as Lebanon." Rachel had never named Sheshbazzar, from the moment she was pronounced to be a leper. She saw how his high character was *staked* upon her integrity; and felt that she was not likely to redeem, by her own future character, the *pledges* he had given to the Elders. He often vouched for her sincerity to them; and now, they said, "God had branded her a hypocrite." And, what answer could Sheshbazzar give to this charge against his

judgment? She could think of none—if she were to be a leper until the day of her death: and she had no hope of recovering.

"We owe it, Esrom, to Sheshbazzar," said Rachel, "to see him no more. He is too deeply committed by me, to reinstate his authority in the synagogue, without disowning me. I am expelled from the synagogue already, and I will not expose him to the painful necessity of confirming the sentence of the Elders. It is well that he had not 'to cast me out!' He must have done it, had he been at home: but, although he would have done it, gently as the Angel of the Lord drove out our first parents from Paradise, I am glad, for his sake and my own, that it is not to do! And, as he can never own me again, I will never render it necessary for him to disown me."

"It never will be necessary to disown you, Rachel!" Esrom replied. "Sheshbazzar will soon have the pleasure to write your name anew, amongst the daughters of the Covenant in Beersheba, and even to enroll it amongst the

living in Jerusalem; for already the plague has ceased to spread on you, and I have caught no infection. It is no longer 'a fretting leprosy.' He who wounded you, has begun to heal you; and, as in the case of Miriam, God will perfect that which concerneth you, and restore to you the timbrel of his praise, at the tabernacle of his presence. Be of good cheer: He is healing our backslidings, and He will blot out our iniquities, for his own Name's sake. I feel warranted, already, by His faithfulness as the Hearer of prayer, to provide the 'two living birds, the cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop,' for the day of your purification in the temple." Having said this, Esrom led her to the door of the tent, and left her for the day without fear; being well aware that neither the shepherds nor the hunters in the wilderness, would venture near the tent of leprosy. He returned to Beersheba to guide his affairs with discretion; and, that his kinsmen, and neighbours, and his men-servants and maid-servants, might see that he had not tempted the Holy One of Is-

rael, by waiting on Rachel. He calculated the *effect* of appearing on his farm, and in the streets, humbled, but unhurt. The bloom of health was on his cheek, and the simple majesty of the palm-tree in his form. He was grave, but not sad; perfectly composed, but perfectly natural. No one could suspect him of acting a part. His object was to moderate the clamour of the rash, and to enable the prudent to suspend their judgment: but he employed no stratagem. He left his appearance and spirit to make their own impression. And many were silenced, and not a few softened. Some indeed said, that "the thin yellow hair" (Lev. 13) of a fretting leprosy would soon be visible on his brow or his beard. Others affirmed that the rose on his cheek, was "a whitish red," already. But all wondered after him and some prayed for him, that "the desire of his eyes" might not be "taken away" by the stroke of judgment.

During seven days Esrom went and return thus, between Beersheba, and the tent in t

wilderness; his step still firm, and his coun tenance unchanged. Every evening he reported to Rachel, the *progress* of public opinion in Beersheba: and every morning he gave directions to his ploughmen and vine-dressers, to his masons and carpenters, to his hewers of wood and drawers of water, just as he was wont to do when he began to manage his farm, and to rebuild the house of his fathers. All his conduct and spirit indicated an humble, but lively hope of Rachel's recovery. Thus, although he said nothing to the people, he compelled them to *think* much.

This course, Esrom pursued for Sheshbazzar's sake; that no *burst* of mockery or upbraiding might meet him, on his return from Jerusalem. He had planned, also, to meet the good old man by the way; deeming that the sight of Rachel would shock him less, than the clamours of the people. He intended also to detain him a day and a night in the wilderness, that by special and united prayer, the Eagle and the eaglets of Beersheba might fully renew their youth, before

resuming the *nest* of their youth. It was, therefore, with joy unspeakable he heard Sheshbazzar say at once, on seeing Rachel, "There is hope in Israel concerning this leprosy:" for any salutation less cordial or prompt, would not have silenced the clamour of the Pilgrims, nor revived her spirit. Her heart was too "sick" with suspense to endure "hope deferred." Had Sheshbazzar been silent at first, or but slow to speak, or had he spoken with less confidence or tenderness than Esrom, her heart would have broke. He knew this; and like Noah, took his weary and weak dove into the ark at once.

It had been with great difficulty, Esrom had persuaded her to meet "the Guide of her youth" in the wilderness. Even when she consented to go forth, she said, "Jephthah's daughter knew not the pang, which her sudden appearance would inflict upon her father. Her timbrels and dances brought him 'very low:' but she was the unconscious cause of his anguish. Sheshbazzar will be equally shocked:

and what can I say when he rends his clothes, exclaiming, 'Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low; thou art one of them that trouble me.'" "Nay," said Esrom, "such lamentation will not rush to his lips; like Moses with Miriam, he will intercede for thee at once, and be the first to welcome thee unto his camp and counsel again; for, like Moses, he is as meek as he is wise."

The case of Miriam was so often quoted and referred to by Esrom, as a parallel to her own case, that Rachel could not forget it altogether. Again and again she proved to herself, that she was not a Miriam, but in her sin and punishment: for she had never been as a *sister* to the Elders she had spoken against; nor had her *timbrel* ever led the song of the Red Sea, when the people celebrated the Exodus. But still the parallel haunted her. It was a case in point, so far as their sin and sentence were alike:—and, might not their pardon be alike too? This question, if it did not create hope, maintained prayer. And when Sheshbazzar

identified her case with Miriam's at once, her prayer, which had only risen upon the one wing of submissive desire, rose on the twin wings of meek solicitude and humble hope. "Sheshbazzar as well as Esrom," she said to herself, "takes the same view of my case." Whilst Rachel was reflecting thus, Sheshbazzar dismissed the Pilgrims of Beersheba. "I tarry in the wilderness," he said, "to lead on this lamb of the flock as she can bear: return ye to the fold in peace; and see that ye limit not the Holy One of Israel by interpreting her calamity, as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did the trials of Job. Leave it to them, to mistake providence; and to Satan to impugn motives. Let us who are aged, especially, judge ourselves, that we may not be judged: for if these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry tree, if it become fruitless?" The Pilgrims departed in silence; but not in sympathy with their leader, or with his lamb. They were afraid to speak; but they were not afraid to suspect the prudence of Sheshbazzar,

or the sincerity of Rachel. He understood their looks; but said nothing more. He turned from them; and, "leaning on the top of his staff, worshipped," until they were out of sight. Whilst thus musing, the fire burned: then, spake he with his tongue. "I am too much humbled by the leprosy of the *spirits* of all flesh, to be shocked or surprised at bodily leprosy. Not that I think lightly of it. It is the strangest of all God's 'strange works;' his Rod of rods, and cup of trembling, when he visits our sins with stripes, and our iniquities with chastisements; but, lo, all these things worketh God, (and many such things are with him,) that he may save souls alive." Some souls can only be saved from unhallowed curiosity and vain imaginations, by startling judgments which, like the sword of the Destroying Angel, so weaken their hearts in "one night," that they dare not turn again to folly: and others require a flaming sword perpetually before their eyes, or a clearing cross upon their shoulder, in order to keep them from folly; because, like Eve,

they are least suspicious of themselves when most happy, and like Lucifer, most aspiring when brightest. The Son of the Morning speculated in heaven, and the Daughter of the Morning, in paradise; and both fell.

"Rachel, thou hast fallen too: but not like Lucifer, to rise no more; but like Eve, to be raised up again. I meet thee in the wilderness; but not like Cain, fleeing from the presence of Jehovah; but like Abel, worshipping before the Sheckinah. God will not despise the sacrifice of a broken spirit, in the desert; and he will accept thy burnt offering, in the sanctuary. Mercy will yet rejoice over judgment, and over thee, with singing."

"Sheshbazzar, I was the tempter," said Esrom; "and first in the transgression. But for me,—Rachel had not fallen." "And, but for you Rachel had not been restored," said Sheshbazzar. It was "a dark saying:" neither Esrom nor Rachel understood it; but neither could forget it. "Is there any thing *before me*," said Esrom "which, without her, I could

not go through?" "Does this leprosy bear upon my Betrothed, as well as upon myself?" said Rachel. "I will explain, in the Tent," said the old man.

No. III.

VARIETIES, FROM MISTAKES.

WHATEVER may be the faults or the defects of our character and spirit, there is not one of them so peculiar, but that some ancient proverb might be found to reprove it, or some experimental maxim to condemn it. Indeed, if either exposures or reproofs could cure faults, the conscientious would soon be faultless: for, what sin, of heart or life, has not been found and declared, by many, to be "an evil and a bitter thing?" Experience, as well as Revelation, has planted a "flaming sword" upon the gate of all wrong habits and tempers; and, although the sword of the former does not, like that of the latter, "turn every way," nor turn at all in the hands of "Cherubim," it turns and flames too, enough to render us without

excuse when we yield to temptation. For, who, of all the hosts of the peevish, the impatient, the irritable, or the rash, ever left a *dying* testimony in favour of their besetting sin? Many a tombstone in the church-yards of our cities and villages, records the domestic happiness and the public esteem, which the virtues and graces of Christian character gained for their possessors; but not one tells of a vice that did no harm, nor of an imperfection that did any good. Gravestones often flatter the dead; but they never say that a passionate or peevish woman was happy, in heart or at home, notwithstanding her ill temper. They never ascribe conjugal love nor maternal influence, to fashionable follies, or to frivolous accomplishments. Neither the toilette nor the piano, the pencil nor the harp, is ever engraven on the URN, as the *explanatory* emblem of the character of the deceased; except, indeed, she has been an *actress!*

But not only do proverbs and experience condemn our faults: we ourselves condemn

the same faults in others, whenever they affect our own interest or convenience. Then we are quite sure, that one might be more courteous, and another more reasonable, and a third more amiable, and a fourth far less talkative, if they would only try! Thus we see no difficulty to prevent them from being to *us*, all they ought to be; and no excuse for them, when they offend us. "Is it not very easy to be polite to one? What good do they get to themselves, from their high airs, or from their snappish humours, or from their capricious conduct? I have no patience with such insolence, nor with such impertinencies."

There it is! We can chafe ourselves into a bad spirit, by chiding, even in thought, the faults and follies of others. Let them only interfere with our comfort, or be somewhat more and greater than our own, and we can be Law-givers and Judges against both.

Even this is not the weakest nor the worst side of our hearts, in regard to our faults. We can condemn them in ourselves, and yet con-

tinue them. We can lament them, and yet allow them to go on. We can even give up excusing them, and yet expect others to forgive and forget them: or rather to overlook them entirely; for we do not like the idea of being *forgiven* by any one but God.

Would that this were all! But it is not. We are quite capable, even after having found our besetting sin of habit or temper, a hinderance to prayer, and a dead weight on hope, to give way to it still. Who has not resolved, at a sacrament it embittered, or under a chastisement it had provoked, or at the breaking up of a backsliding it had brought on, that it should be cut off and cast away? But the casting away, has not followed the cutting off. The hand has held it, after the heart condemned it. It has got back to its old place again, either by some ligament which was left uncut, or under the promise that it would no longer betray us.

Why is it, that neither the experience of ages, even when its warnings become proverbs; nor our own experience, even when it is bit

ter, has power enough to correct what they thus condemn? Why are we so slow to do and become, all that we feel we ought to do and be? This is not explained by saying, that nothing but the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit can subdue our faults. That is very true: but it was equally true years ago; and yet, in some things, we are as faulty as ever. Thus, the Spirit does not touch them, when we let them alone: except, indeed, when he strikes at them by the sharp rods of providence, or frowns upon them by dark clouds of desertion; and neither of these modes of communicating sanctifying grace is "joyous, but grievous," however it may yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness afterwards.

It is very easy to *talk* fine things about sanctifying grace: but the sober truth is, that that grace is just Divine power giving *effect* to the gospel itself, or to providence along with the gospel, or to eternal things along with both. The Spirit works by them all in turn, and by them all together; but never without any of them. He may begin sanctification by

affliction, whilst the gospel is not much known: or he may begin it by the gospel, whilst affliction is quite unknown: but He will not carry it on long in either way. He will lead out the afflicted to the Cross of Christ more fully; or He will lay some cross upon the believing, when their faith itself becomes less purifying. This is the general rule of both the work and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Whilst His right hand is for ever glorifying Christ by the gospel, His left is often doing the same by the furnace. He thus sanctifies by the truth, and by providence.

There is, however, a way of carrying on sanctification, without *much* affliction. There is a "needs be" for some, in the case of all Christians; and, accordingly, all are chastised more or less. "For, what son is he" (or what daughter is she) "whom the Father chasteneth not?" Still, as the whole and sole object of chastisement is, the taking away of sin, or the promotion of holiness; that object may be secured in some degree by other means. Indeed,

God *prefers* other means to the rod, when they answer the purpose. Judgment is always His "strange work," even in sanctification. I mean, He does not "afflict willingly." Let any sin be really given up, or any neglected duty taken up, on the ground of any *holy* motive whatever, and He can dispense with the rod. Yea, He will be delighted to have, thus, no occasion to use it. Well; the contemplation of "ETERNAL THINGS" can supersede the necessity of temporal affliction, and especially of spiritual calamity, in many cases.

Did you ever observe this fact in your Bible? If not, you have a new and a noble lesson to learn. I say "noble," because if the sight of the words ETERNAL THINGS, suggest to your mind only dismal, or dark, or even awful ideas, you have yet to study the subject. All eternal things are, indeed, solemn: so are all the perfections of God; so are all the glories of the Lamb: so are all the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit: but their solemnity does not detract from their sweetness. It heightens their

beauty by hallowing it. And had you contemplated eternity, as you have the Divine character, "in the face of Jesus," the light of its glory, instead of intimidating you, would have charmed or soothed you. Eternal things present no *dark* side, to a woman who loves holiness, and desires to feel their sanctifying influence upon herself. She is as welcome to look upon them without fear, as to look unto Jesus with hope. Her hope may be as full of immortality, as it is full of Christ.

Do you doubt this at all? Just observe, for a moment, how John proves it, when he directs our attention to the second coming of Christ. That glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour, has nothing appalling, in John's account of it. He is referring to it for sanctifying purposes; and therefore all he says is soft and simple. "Beloved, we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as He is." Thus, nothing but *likeness* to Christ is presented to our view, when John points to the grand assize of the

universe. Why? Because the Apostle wa
to commend the *holy* influence of a hope fi
immortality. Hence he adds immedia
"Every man who hath this hope in C
(the hope of being perfectly and eternally
Him) purifieth himself even as He is pu
1 John iii. 2, 3. Thus, you learn, that a
fying hope cannot go too calmly forth, nor
far out, amongst the solemnities of the last
We may look forward to it with as much c
posure as Angels, and with more expect
than Angels: for it will be no new era in
holiness; whereas it will be both the ful
of time and the fulness of eternity, in our n
history. We shall be like Christ, when
"see Him as he is!"

Now, it is "this Hope" which can, v
fully embraced and cherished, set aside
necessity of some afflictions, by setting
purify ourselves after the model of the Savi
pureness. What this hope does in sanctif
our character and spirit, neither the fur
nor the rod will be employed to do. The

Spirit will work without the *fire* of Providence, in changing us into the image of Christ, just in proportion as we look with open face to the Glory of Christ, for the express purpose of imitating him. Yes; let His Glory change us "from glory to glory," or from one heavenly virtue on to another; and whatever conformity to the Divine Image we gain by this purifying process of holy contemplation will lessen the necessity for severe purifying discipline.

How do you like this plan of following Holiness, by looking to the character and coming of Christ, as you go forward on your pilgrimage? Will you rather take your chance of being purified by the furnace and the rod, than take the trouble of purifying yourself by a studied imitation of the Saviour? Will you rather leave your "dross" to be purged by the refining fire of Providence, than place it thus, from day to day, under the heat of the Sun of Righteousness, and beneath the light of a hope full of Immortality?

True; it is not easy to maintain such a good

hope, even through grace! That is not, however, a valid excuse for not forming this habit of "looking unto Jesus," for sanctification. For, we do hope, to be with Him and like Him, at his coming. We never give up this hope altogether, for any length of time. We often forget it, but we cannot forego it entirely. Our hearts would break, or our reason fail, if we had *no hope* of salvation. It, is, therefore, a mere waste of time, if not something worse, to keep harping about the difficulty of hoping: for, however difficult or easy it may be, you *do* hope to reach heaven at last. You could not help doing so, if you were to try. I am quite aware that you have said at times, "There is no hope." Sometimes you have *seen* none: but even then yo were *looking* for some; and thus hoping to fin this hope of eternal life again.

But, a truce—to this reasoning. I must monstrate. You have not given up all hope heaven. You need not, you ought not: you then *keep* hold of it, and yet take such hold as shall have a holy influence

you? True; you have added to your faith virtue: but will you add nothing more? Is *one* mark of grace enough to set all your fears at rest? Can you be satisfied with just keeping up the degree of piety you began with? What!—is that less than at first?

I am not upbraiding you. I know but too well, the treacherous tendencies of the heart; and how much the world, both by its snares and cares, can work upon these tendencies. My object is, therefore, to bring "the powers of the world to come," to bear more directly, and habitually, and sweetly, upon your hopes, and habits, and spirit. Again, therefore, I say, you quite mistake, if you still imagine that you could not keep Eternity in sight, without sadness or dread. Indeed, you have never fairly looked at it, as Jesus has illuminated it by the Gospel, if you even suspect it could embitter or embarrass any life, which you can live with safety to your soul. The life which the prospect of eternal life can darken, is no *safe* life, whatever else it may be. I refer, however, to

the prospect of Eternal Life, as the GOSPEL presents it to those who love the Saviour; and not to the form of gloom and terror, in which some of them view it. To many, the Judgment-seat and Eternity, are only objects of awful hazard and intimidation; furnishing nothing but *checks* now, and "peradventures" hereafter. Were this true, I should be as much afraid as any one, to look at the things which are unseen and eternal.

But just observe how PETER presents them to the followers of Christ. He does not hide nor soften the terrors of the Last Day: but still, he himself moves amidst the conflagration of the universe, with something of the calm majesty in which the Eternal Spirit moved upon the face of the dark waters of Chaos; and even leads the Church along with him singing, as sweetly, amidst melting elements and burning worlds, "We look for new heavens and a new earth," as the Angelic Morning Stars sang in the train of the Spirit at the creation.

Thus Peter describes "the Day of God." 2

Pet. iii. 10. "The heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and pass away with a great noise; the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." And can this be seen or anticipated without consternation and alarm? Can any heart be strong or composed during this catastrophe? Yes; by the "NEVERTHELESS" of the Divine promise, we may not only look, but also "*hasten*," in both thought and hope, "unto the coming of the day of God:" for we are warranted to look for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Neither the suddenness nor the solemnity of the end of all things, shall overwhelm the spirits, or shake the hopes, of the dead in Christ, when they awake at the trump of the Archangel, amid the flaming torches, which, having illuminated the Judgment-seat until the opened Books are closed again, shall set on fire the whole course of nature. Even then, and "never-*theless*" (not at all the less on account of "such things,") shall the saints be

able to possess their souls in peace, and fitted to admire and glorify their Saviour. "He shall be glorified in His saints, and admired of them that love him," says Paul, "even when He comes with flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel." 2 Thess. i. 10.

Now, mark: it is in connexion with this "hope of their calling," that Paul prays for the Thessalonians that God would "count them worthy of this calling," by fulfilling in them the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power; that thus "Christ might be glorified in them" now as well as at his coming. In like manner, it is in connexion with the sublime and soothing prospect of lifting up their heads with perfect composure amidst

"The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds,"

that Peter urges upon all who "look for such things," to be "diligent," that they may be found by Christ, on that day, in peace, without spot and blameless."

You see now, how much faith the Apostles had in the sanctifying power of Eternal things. They commend, as well as enforce, the habit of looking at them as inspiring and constraining motives to holiness. How, then, can you be "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness," if you neglect or dread to look at "such things?"

Meet this question fairly. You must look at *something*, in order to be able or willing to follow holiness. You have looked, with some advantage, to not a few things already. You have looked to the Law; and said, "What manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness:" and this consideration has done you good. You have looked at the Gospel; and said, "My life and conversation should be becoming the gospel of Christ, and adorn its doctrines:" and this has done you still more good. You have looked at the great Cloud of Witnesses, who through faith and patience now inherit the promises; and said, "I must try to follow them as far as they

followed Christ:" and this remembrance of the Dead in Christ, has helped you on in the narrow way which leadeth to everlasting life. But still, all these things, holy as they are in their influence, and useful as you have found them, have not made you so like Christ as you *wish* to be, nor even as you *need* to be, in order to "make your calling and election sure." No; you yourself are not *quite sure*, that you shall be "found of Him in peace at his coming," even when your hopes are brightest. "The full assurance of hope" is a plant of slow growth, and of great tenderness. Indeed, it never arrives at any thing like maturity, nor becomes an *evergreen* in any heart, until the things which are unseen and eternal are "hoped for." Heb. ii. 1. Now this they cannot be, unless they are *looked at by faith:* but just taking them for granted, or not forgetting them entirely, is not looking at them by faith. "Faith is the substance (or gives subsistence in the mind) to the things hoped for." Accordingly, it was to Believers as "*looking* for such

things" as acquittals and crowns and glory, on the Last Day, that Peter said, "Seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." It was to Christians, as anticipating and realizing the end of all earthly things, that he made the solemn appeal, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" And observe: in order to help them to answer this question, he urges them to *continue* "looking for, hastening (in thought and hope) unto the day of the Lord." Thus Peter did not think that they could answer his question well, without a growing habit of considering the end of Time and the full apocalypse of Eternity: a plain proof, by the way, that he had no fear of saddening or unsecularizing his converts by keeping the light of Eternity around them!

Well; you have said to yourself, whilst looking at the Cross, and to the Mercy-seat, and to the Sacrament, and to the Moral Law as the rule of life,—"What manner of person ought

I to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness?" And all these "great sights" of privilege and duty, have "greatly helped" you to bring forth some of the first fruits of holiness unto the glory of God through Jesus Christ. And you will never "bring forth more fruit," if you look away from these motives, or allow yourself to be drawn away by any thing that would displace them. Should you ever withdraw your eye from the Cross or the Mercy-seat, to fix it upon visions or novelties in religion, there will soon be an end to your present hope and holiness. You may even become such "manner of persons," as those who listen to "Tongues," which teach no knowledge, or to Interpreters of Prophecy, who do nothing to fulfil the prophecies, which foretell the spread of the Gospel. "But I hope better things of you; even the things which accompany Salvation, though I thus speak."

Will you, then, in order to increase your hopes and holiness, try the experiment of looking distinctly at the solemn realities of eter-

nity; plying your heart and conscience with the solemn question, "What manner of person ought I to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" Will you put it to yourself, just as God puts it to you? It is not, you see, a bare or abstract question in morals. It embraces universal holiness of heart and life, and comes before you enshrined with the two-fold splendours of burning worlds and a bright eternity. Will you meet it, as you wish to meet the grand and awful consummation it is founded upon? Do you hesitate?

Why not look at such things now, since you must see them at last? "Every eye shall see" the descending Judge, and the dissolving universe. You must see them, "for yourself and not for another." And, if you cannot bear to *think* of them, how will ye bear to *see* them—to *hear* them—to *feel* them, when neither rocks nor mountains, if they could fall upon you, would be able to hide from you the scenes of that day? But, perhaps, you are

afraid to hope so freely, as I commend, or as you wish? WHY?

"The hope set before us" in the gospel, like the Sheckinah of the Divine presence which went before the church in the wilderness, is "a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night;" neither so dim as to be indistinct, nor so bright as to be dazzling, to the eye. It is, indeed, as full of immortality as the sun is full of light: but as the sun shines through an atmosphere which softens his rays, and occasionally shades them too, so the hope of eternal life takes so many of the sweetest forms of social life, and is so surrounded by the duties and trials of public, domestic, and mortal life, that it never shines too brightly to be looked at, nor too darkly to be seen. It is emphatically a hope set *before* us: not so far off as to strain the eye in looking for it, nor so near as to pain the eye, in looking at it.

And then, how effectually it is set before us! The pillar of cloud and fire came down from heaven into the wilderness, unexplained and

unheralded. Neither Angel nor Prophet foretold its descent from the throne, nor its continuance on the footstool. It was set before the church, with only its own light and shade to commend it. Revelation did not define its nature, nor the covenant ratify its duration, nor the harps of glory celebrate its worth. It came into the world unsung, and departed from the world unmissed. Not thus is the hope of eternal life set before us. "The bringing in of that better hope," was not in silence, nor in darkness. It was brought into the world with the full chorus of all worlds. The hope of the world, like the creation of the world, was welcomed by the morning stars singing together, and by all the angelic sons of God shouting for joy. The Lord Jesus Christ is the hope of glory: and when God brought "the only Begotten into the world, he said, And let all the Angels of God worship him." All the Patriarchs of God had typified Him—all the Prophets of God had foretold Him—all the oracles of God had described Him—all the covenants of God had

guarantied Him—all the providences of God had accredited Him as the hope of the world; and, to crown this attestation of His character and errand, all the armies of God sang at His advent, "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men!"

Thus the hope of eternal life is set before us in the person and sacrifice of Him, upon whom God has visibly set all the seals and tokens of the eternal power and Godhead; and by the ministry and miracles of men who could not be deceived, and of angels who could not mistake. Nor is the *benefit* of hoping in Christ set before us less clearly, or less impressively, than the fact that He is the *only* hope set before us. The concurrent testimony of all ages, is, that "hope in Him maketh not ashamed." The throne of heaven is already thronged with proofs of this. Even on earth, none have been put to shame before men, by the influence of a good hope through grace, when that hope laid hold upon the *glory* which grace leads to. "Every man who hath this hope in Christ

purifieth himself even as He is pure?" The heartless hope of a death-bed conversion, or the half-hearted hope of just escaping hell in some way at last, may not sanctify the character at all. Such *hopers* will have occasion to be ashamed before God and man, whether they own it or not now: and the shame will become "confusion of face," as well as of spirit, when they are about to exchange worlds.

I would have you hope enough—to make you happy in your mind, and holy in your character. For, what is the use of hoping too little, to produce this very desirable and necessary effect? It cannot be produced at all without hope; and there will never be much holiness or happiness from poor hopes. They will either produce *poor spirits* or *poorer virtues*. She who has not hope enough in Christ, to keep her spirits from despondency, will not do nor attempt much for the honour of Christ: and she who can *enjoy herself* without settled hopes of salvation, will content herself with still less.

This subject requires to be looked into with

much impartiality, and with no small degree of holy jealousy. Now it is quite as possible for you to hope too little, as for the hypocrite to hope too much. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish," because he *is* a hypocrite: and just because you are *not* a hypocrite, your spirits may sink, or your character not rise at all in strength and beauty. This is no paradox, whatever it may seem at first sight. There is sure to be much depression, or but little diligence, wherever there is "no guile," and but little hope. And for this obvious reason. A guileless mind deals so honestly with itself, that nothing can counterbalance its self-condemnation and fear, but a full apprehension of the sufficiency and freeness of the Saviour's grace; and, therefore, the very fidelity of the conscience must paralyze the heart or the hands in the service of God, if the riches of that grace are not clearly seen to be equally adapted and designed to meet the case. Thus there cannot be good spirits without a good hope through grace, wherever the conscience is faithful or

tender; nor will such a conscience purify the character much, whilst it derives no peace from the blood of the Lamb. It must be somewhat pacified by the Cross of Christ, before it can delight in copying the example of Christ.

Consider this. It is not with you now as it once was, nor as it still is with the self-righteous, that the abandonment of a wrong habit, or the commencement of a new duty, can create the hope of salvation. You know the way of salvation too well, to imagine that you can make your peace with God, by laying down sins, or by taking up mere moral duties. You see and feel, indeed, the necessity of doing both; but you see and feel equally, that you cannot be *justified* by the works of the law, whatever good they might do you in other respects. They are not the price of an interest in Christ, nor the direct way of finding an interest in Him: and without *that*, you know that they will be of no avail. Thus mere duty must ever seem to you now, useless labour, until you can work from love and gratitude to

the Saviour. Well, thus you never will work, until you venture to *hope*, "that by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved." *Waiting* for the coming of this good hope, like working for it, will not bring it. You must just "lay hold upon the hope set before you in the Gospel," or live in suspense, and thus in indecision too: for character will not settle nor rise, whilst hope is unsettled.

I do not forget, in saying this, that there are some very lovely characters, who *say* that they have little or no hope. They have, however, more than they imagine. I do not mean that they say one thing, and think another: but that they mean by hope, much more than hope itself means.

Hence, in speaking of their own case they use language which, however familiar, misleads themselves and others: "I cannot *see* my interest in Christ; cannot *see* my title to the promises; cannot *see* my election or my calling." Now it would not be altogether unfair nor unkind, to bring down upon such com-

plaints the apostolic remonstrance, "What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." This refers, indeed, not so much to our hoping in Christ for mercy and grace now, as to the things hoped for when the whole Creation, in common with the Church, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Rom. viii. 21, 25. Still it is true, that hope, like faith, is not "sight," nor necessarily "assurance;" and, therefore, it does not follow that an humble, devout, and exemplary woman has no hope, because she says, "I cannot *see* my interest in Christ or the promises." In speaking thus, she is not thinking of what the Gospel warrants her to hope for; but either of what she wishes for, or what she once enjoyed.

This is not a distinction without a difference. It is by far too common to confound hope with rapturous ecstacy, or with perfect peace, or with spiritual and heavenly mindedness: and

when these delicious feelings subside, to say,—that hope is lost. It would hardly be more unwise to say, that *reason* is lost. Reason had as much connexion with these feelings, whilst they lasted, as hope: but, who suspects that reason is fled, when rapture or holy calm is gone? Neither reason nor hope is intended to keep up high emotion for ever.

Thus we ought to be very careful how we speak and think about the hope of salvation. It is, remember, a *sinner's* hope—a *penitent's* hope—a *pilgrim's* hope: and, therefore, it must not be expected nor desired in such a degree, as would banish all painful feelings. We are fully warranted, and quite welcome, to hope in Christ for present grace and future glory: but we are not warranted to expect such grace as would leave nothing in our nature to humble us; nor such foretastes of heaven, as would render us insensible to trials or temptations on earth. We may be really happy, notwithstanding outward trials, and inward struggles; but the perfect happiness of being without any of

them, does not belong to Time; it is the bliss of Eternity.

I am not contradicting nor forgetting myself, by thus guarding you against hoping for too much. I repeat, with more confidence than ever, that you are not hoping enough in Christ, if you are *unhappy* in your mind, when you think of Judgment or Eternity. You have too little hope, if either your spirits sink, or your efforts relax, in following holiness. I must go still further, and say, it is not exactly the sinner's hope, nor the penitent's hope, nor the pilgrim's hope, that you are thinking about, if you say that you can get but little hope from the Gospel. What would you *have*, that the glorious Gospel does not promise? Depend upon it, you are seeking some *unpromised* form of the hope of salvation, or some *disproportionate* degree of that good hope, if you find it almost impossible to hope for your own salvation. It would be utterly impossible for you to despair or despond, if you wanted nothing but what is promised.

Be not offended nor surprised, if I suspect you of wanting more. I do so, because I think favourably, upon the whole, of your motives and spirit, in attaching a very *high* meaning to Christian hope. This is far wiser than taking low views of it. You are, indeed, quite right in feeling quite sure, that there should be a very great difference between natural hope and spiritual hope. That kind of hope which you could keep up without much difficulty, whilst you were careless or formal, ought not to satisfy you, now that you know the evil of sin, and the infinite value of the soul and salvation. That "great salvation" deserves and requires a "good hope," in more senses than the goodness o either its practical influence or its humble sp rit: it ought also to be grateful and joyf Well; it may be both, without being all t you mean by "a good hope through grace."

Let me explain myself freely on this pc We are very prone to fix the meaning of from our first taste of the *joy* of salvation. this, however well meant, is unwise. It

warranted. This is *more* than hope, in the relief which is usually obtained from the first sight of the glory and grace of the Saviour. The Holy Spirit often renders that discovery of the Cross so cheering, or so charming, that the whole soul is absorbed and transported with it We can think of nothing else. We can wish for nothing more. It is heaven on earth. We could take an eternity of it.

> "That holy calm within the breast,
> Seems the dear pledge of *heavenly* rest."

But although this be hope, it is also much more than hope. It is that joy of salvation, by which God revives and wins the heart of the contrite ones. It is that manifestation of Himself, by which he proves to us that he "giveth grace to the humble." It is that "demonstration of the Spirit," which places beyond all doubt, both the reality and the blessedness of vital godliness. In a word; it is the strong consolation of a dying *saint*, given to a sinking

penitent, that she may know and never forget the worth of Christ.

Now we ought to be very thankful for this timely and complete discovery of the all-sufficiency of the atoning sacrifice. It is a fine security, for ever after, against false doctrine and superficial experience. It is not, however, a security against *practical* error. Accordingly, one of two errors is often fallen into, when this high state of enjoyment falls away. It does subside: and then, we either count nothing hope, which does not come up to it; or we do no more in religion, than just enough to be somewhat in the way, or not exactly *out* of the way, of finding it again. And thus it is, that some sink into despondency, and others into heartless formality. One becomes sad, and another inconsistent: and both from the same cause,—they cannot hope as they *once* did. The hope (as they call it) which first cheered the spirits of the one, and inspired the diligence of the other is gone: and because they cannot get *it* back, they both *go*

back; the one into the region of doubts and fears, and the other into the region of declension.

Now, which of these states are you in? Whichever it be, there is but one remedy. You must regard something else as the hope of salvation, than a return of the precise kind and degree of joy which you first called hope. I do not say, that that joy will never revisit your spirit. I do not think (as Sheshbazzar would have said) that the candle of the Lord will never shine upon you again, as it did when it was first lighted. But I do both say and think, that it will not do so, whilst you are merely *waiting* for it. You must be humble enough to begin with the sinner's hope, and to go on with the pilgrim's hope, if you would be happy in your own mind again. And, why not be thus humble and content? What right has any one to make *terms* with God, for faith or obedience?

Just look at such conduct in two cases. What would you think of a woman who could

say in words,—"I have not that comfort in religion, which I had at one time; and, therefore, I have neither heart nor motive to be very devotional in my closet, or very exemplary in my family, or very liberal to the cause of God, or very much attached to the means of grace? I was all this, whilst my comfort lasted: but, as that is gone, it would be a kind of *hypocrisy* on my part now, were I to do all that I used to do, just as if nothing had happened to discourage or disconcert me. I know very well, that I am not doing right at present: but I know too, that I am quite willing to return to my 'first love,' and to my 'first works' too, whenever God returns my first hopes to me. He has only to shine and smile upon my soul as in the days of old, in order to my becoming again all that I *was* in the days of old. This, I am waiting for; and I hope it will come in course of time. Accordingly, I do not go altogether out of the way of meeting with it. I do not pray much in secret, certainly: but I still keep under a faithful ministry, and keep

up my connexions with the church and sacraments of Christ. This, indeed, is my chief reason for hoping at all: for if God do not meet with my soul again there, I am not likely to find Him again at home. I have no heart to seek Him at home now: but, could I only get such another strong impulse from the sanctuary, as that which first sent me to my closet and my Bible, I make no doubt but I should go on again as well as ever. And, is not this new impulse likely to come? Surely, my soul will not be 'required' of me, whilst it is in this unprepared state, nor before God has healed my backsliding! If it should be required of me 'this night'—or this year—what ——?"

What would you say to a case like this? Sheshbazzar would have said at once, and that in his most solemn and tender manner, "Take the *sinner's* hope: for as a backsliding *child*, no line of the 'scarlet thread' of Adoption will save you, like Rahab, now that the Ark of the Covenant is sounding its Rams' horns around

your walls." I say, in plainer terms, "'The hope set before you in the Gospel,' may well suffice you. It would ill become you to stand out or stipulate with God for your first joy. He deserves your 'first love,' and your 'first works' too, for the hope still before you in the Gospel. And it is this, 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' This is hope enough to make any one happy, who believes it: yes, and holy too: for what could bind you to follow holiness, if the assuring promise of salvation, from the lips of a God who cannot lie, do not?

"Do you dislike to have your hope of salvation thus thrown upon the *eventual* answer of earnest prayer? If so, you are not humble enough yet, to welcome salvation by grace alone. You will, however, be glad to do so, when you know yourself more intimately." Thus I should address such a woman, who was still "professing godliness," and yet unwilling to take up hope by prayer.

Look now at another case. There is a wo-

man, not worldly-minded; not exactly averse to devotion or diligence; and not at all wishing for any assurance of hope or faith, which would be a pillow to sloth or inconsistency. But she has lost all her hope; as she calls her *first* enjoyment at the cross and the mercy-seat. She can neither glow nor melt, think nor feel, there, as she once did: and just because she cannot, she says, that she cannot see one ray of hope for herself. The fact is, she means by a ray of hope, a beam, if not a burst, of that joy which shone upon her soul, when she was first enabled to commit her soul into the hands of Christ: or she wants a degree of hope which would put down at once all the plagues of her heart; and keep out all temptation and vain thoughts; and make all duty delight, and all trials easy. She says, indeed, that she would be thankful for a single and the slightest ray of hope. But, tell her that God is *sure* to answer her cry for mercy; and that, although a fixed day-star of hope does not cheer her. It is not that *form* of hope which

cheered her formerly. It does not warm or melt her heart at a glance, as her first believing views of the Lamb slain did. She is also too agitated, or too depressed, to grasp with her understanding, the sublime fact, that God's command, "Call on Me," is God's command to *hope* in him. He means "Hope," when He says, "Pray;" He means, "Pray," whenever he says, "Hope." But the very simplicity of this way of setting hope before us, seems *mystery*, if not mockery, to a sad spirit, when sadness has been long indulged. "Would not God show some '*token* for good' at once, (it is said) if he intended to be gracious? But He sealeth up even the stars!" Yes; but just that the desponding may look at the sun. It is not breaking a "bruised reed," to say so. She will never hope, who does not see that the command to *pray*, is a Sun "shining in its strength." How truly Paul says, "We are saved by Hope!"

ALLEGORY. No. 3.

RACHEL'S CURE.

WHEN they arrived at the Tent in the wilderness, Esrom spread the skin of the young Lion, which had perished in the swellings of Jordan, for a couch to Sheshbazzar. The Patriarch said, as he sat down upon it, "An *old* lion would not have rushed over the precipice after his prey, when the Jordan had overflowed all its banks. He would have couched when he heard the roar of the waters; or hunted in another direction, until they had subsided. ESROM! you have often pursued your speculations into the swellings of a river, which, like the Jordan, discharges itself into the DEAD Sea. It is of the Lord's mercies, that you were not swept by the wild waves of con-

jecture, into the dark Asphaltic of idolatry.* You may well say with David, of the God of your fathers,—'He sent from above, he took me—he drew me out of many waters.' But for this, 'the proud waves' of Philistia, Egypt, or Babylon, had '*come into thy soul*:' for all their billows went over thee, and even their water-spouts had thee often under their wings. You despised idols; but you worshipped the powers of Nature, and all but consulted the powers of Darkness. You would have divined with the cup of Pharaoh, or stipulated with the witch of Endor, for the secrets of the Future; and for the secrets of the Invisible, you would have questioned, alternately, the oracles of Babylon, the graves of the Dead, or the stars of Heaven."

Such had been the character of Esrom, until the master-spirit of Sheshbazzar, and the meek spirit of Rachel, threw their joint

* See No. IV. page 167, THE MARYS.

spell over his prying curiosity. Even then, he bowed his *head* only, to Judaism. His understanding yielded to the arguments of the Patriarch, and his heart to the influence of the virgin of Beersheba: but upon his spirit, the truth, not the *grace* of Judaism, had all the power. It was the logic of the system, not the *mercy* of the dispensation, that affected him. Its external evidence was a hook in his jaws; but its internal glory, as the only hope of a sinner, had no charms for him. The rays of that glory fell upon the scales of his self-righteousness, as the winds of heaven on the scales of Leviathan, and the bones of Behemoth, unfelt; "one was so near to another, that no air could come between them." Job. xli. He had bowed at the side of Sheshbazzar, amidst the thousands of Israel, when the High Priest went within the veil with the interceding Atonement; but, although the veil of the Temple *shook* with the intensity of their emotion, Esrom's heart nei-

ther beat with suspense before, nor burned with gratitude after, the answer of peace came from the Mercy-seat. "The system must be true; and therefore it ought to be respected,"—was the whole amount of his worship. "Its miracles counterbalance its mysteries,"—was his only reason for believing. The eyes of his understanding, like the eyelids of the morning, opened without fear; and his hopes, like the wings of the morning, expanded without effort; whether he thought of life or death, time or eternity. He was too rich, to feel dependent on Providence; and too proud to be a debtor to grace. He took for granted, that the *little* mercy he needed (for, how could it be *much*, after all his morals?) must, as a matter of course, be quite sure. For, what had he ever done, that his soul should be in any danger? He had, indeed, been rather *free* in his inquiries: but then, *truth* was his object! Thus Esrom reasoned; and thus he *felt* too. He had not borne "the yoke in

his youth." Like Moab, he had "been at ease, from his youth; and thus, his conscience had never been confronted with the terrors of the Law or Eternity. Nothing had ever disturbed his self-complacency, until Rachel's penitence, on hearing the parable of the Grapes of Gomorrah, compelled him to pause and ask himself,—"If Rachel weep, can I be right, or altogether safe? Her spirit is both purer and humbler than my spirit: and yet she trembles before God! Is this wisdom or weakness, on her part? Weakness! Who ever saw Rachel *weak?* Her spirit has towered in strength and majesty, ever since its roots, like the cedars of Lebanon, 'dipped their feet in the oil' of the olive valley. Can I be safe—if she was in danger until then?" This question went to his *heart:* and whilst it lodged there, Rachel was won, and Sheshbazzar conciliated, and Esrom himself somewhat humbled. Still, his "eye was not single." It caught occasional glimpses of the genius of Judaism, as

the religion of a sinner, and as the shadow of good things to come; but it never looked steadfastly to the substance of the system, nor to the simplicity of his own motives. He became a great "doer of the law," just that he might be a less *debtor* to the covenant. He threw the whole weight of his influence into the Synagogue; but chiefly, that he might conciliate the Elders to Rachel. He beautified the building, and placed new copies of the Law upon the desk; but not until he found out that Rachel was preparing splendid hangings, of her own needle-work, for the Tabernacle. He often led the choir, when the great HOSANNA was sung, if Rachel was present: but when she was not there, his voice was sure to be *out of tune*, owing (as he said) to his being out too early amongst his reapers, or too late amongst his sheep-folds, in a day of rain. Thus his eye was not single, even when his hand was most active and liberal.

Rachel was the first to discover his *mixed*

motives, and not slow to arraign them. With equal promptness and point, she asked him, when his mantle of "*flax and wool*," would be ready to wear before the Lord in Zion? and, why he did not offer "*swine's blood*," as well as the firstlings of his flock, at the altar? Her Parable, as she applied it, told upon his conscience, as "The Grapes of Gomorrah" did upon her own. He was shocked by the discovery of his mixed motives; and, from that time, began to pray, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name." The impiety of serving the CREATOR for the sake of the *creature*, unveiled to him all the ungodliness of his spirit; and made him smite upon his breast, in all the bitterness of self-condemnation. Sheshbazzar had marked this revolution, and resolved to train Esrom for the ELDERSHIP of Beersheba; and as his own successor in the guidance of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem. For this he had often "wrestled until the break of day," with the Angel of the Covenant. For this, he had long watched and

prayed daily. It was to this he referred, when he said to Esrom, in the wilderness, "*But for your sake Rachel would not have been restored.*"

He repeated this in the tent; and added, "The Shepherd of Israel intends thee to feed His sheep and lambs, and therefore he will spare the help, 'meet for' thee. Thou art not fit to be trusted *alone* yet, with such a charge. Thou couldst not be calculated upon for prudence or fidelity, if thy betrothed were taken away at this time. It is not, therefore, for thy merit she is spared; but in pity to thy weakness, and in consideration of the work thou art called unto. Give thy *heart* to that work, from henceforth; and thus render unnecessary such visitations as I incurred. God had to write me '*childless*," and then '*widower*' before I gave all my heart to His glory. He had to make 'my soul *forget* prosperity,' before I would identify my interests with His cause, or seek my happiness in 'the good of His heritage.'"

Then, turning to Rachel, who sat leaning her head upon the ark of her covenants, the old man said, "Rachel, I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but I have studied the past, and thus can anticipate the future, in some of its certain wants. It will always want Sarahs for its Abrahams, Rachels for its Jacobs, and Deborahs for its Lapidoths. Whilst SAMUELS are wanted at the altar of the Lord, there must be *Hannahs* in Ramathaimzophim. Even whilst SAMSONS are needed in Israel, there must be *Mothers in Israel*, like the wife of Manoah: and all such wives and mothers must 'bear the yoke in their youth.' God has laid his heaviest yoke on thy young neck; and thou hast not been, 'as a bullock unaccustomed' to it, impatient, or obstinate. Ye can both say, 'our hearts are not turned back, though Thou, O God, hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.' Ye have both gone astray like lost sheep; but ye both returned to the shepherd of Israel,

the moment He employed his guardian crook as a chastising rod; and now, it is over you as a pastoral crook again, and will soon guide you back in peace, to all the green pastures and still waters of Zion. This leprosy will give place to health, in thy countenance; and this lowness of spirits, to the joy of salvation. But, my children! let the dawn of this hope, as it brightens unto perfect day, bring all your *responsibilities*, as well as your prospects, distinctly before you. Ye are about to be blessed again, that, like Abraham and Sarah, ye may be 'a blessing,' in your house and neighbourhood. Know therefore, and remember, that if ye dare to 'live unto yourselves' again, 'a worse thing will befall you.'"

There was no occasion to prolong the conversation. Rachel's leprosy was rapidly passing away. The composure and tenderness of Sheshbazzar, had created a crisis in her spirits, which led on her health, as if Lot's angel had taken her by the hand, and whispered a message of peace from the throne, in

tones and terms of heavenly sympathy; for Sheshbazzar closed the evening with prayer. And, what a prayer! Never, since Jacob wrestled with the Angel on Peniel, had such petitions been poured from the heart, or pressed into heaven. "Whilst he was yet speaking," Rachel was recovering.

No. IV.

VARIETIES, FROM INATTENTION.

Too much importance cannot be attached to a right creed, except when it is put in the room of a holy character, or of an humble spirit. Then, however, there is something equally awful and ominous in orthodoxy. Not that a sound creed itself is a dangerous thing. Far from it! Indeed, there can be no true holiness nor humility, without soundness in the faith, upon all *cardinal* points. There may be virtues of character, which are intended for holiness: and virtues of temper, which are intended for humility: but, as both holiness and humility have their chief reasons in the revealed character and will of God, the conduct and spirit (however good) which are not chiefly influenced by these reasons, are not those virtues. She

who goes no further than the general principle —"I ought to be holy because God is holy; and humble because God is great," is certainly wiser than the woman who merely avoids vice and pride because they are vulgar: but still, the former is almost as far from being "wise unto salvation," as the latter. She assigns, indeed, a much better reason than the latter for her conduct and spirit: for it is a scriptural reason. That, however, is not enough, so long as it is her *only* reason. God has laid down other reasons than his own holiness, why we should be holy; and other reasons than his own greatness, why we should be humble. He enforces these graces of character, by the purifying virtue and design of the blood of Christ, and by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and by the sublime perfection of heavenly bliss. Now, although all these reasons may be resolved into the glorious holiness of God, as their original fountain, or moral cause, it is certainly not as such, that she sees the matter, who is less influenced by the love of Christ,

than by the law of duty. ANGELS only are able to be holy, "because God is holy." She is, therefore, both heedless and heartless in religion, who satisfies herself with this single motive. Alas, all the motives and reasons furnished by all the wonders of Redeeming Love, produce but too little holiness, even in those who admire them most; that morality, therefore, which can subsist without them, must be very meagre indeed.

It is, however, a very solemn and startling fact, that, in some things, the character and spirit of females, who act only from a strong sense of propriety, or upon a vague principle of duty, surpass those of some women who profess "godliness," upon evangelical principles. "This is a sore evil under the sun!" It proves that there is a way of believing "in vain," or of "holding the truth" without the love of it: a state of mind and conscience, of all others the most ruinous! For, if the glorious Gospel is believed, without being obeyed, one of two things is certain: either that the

person is verging towards a reprobate mind, or that she was never renewed at all in the spirit of her mind. The latter is, indeed, the more likely supposition; for "a reprobate mind," or abandonment to judicial hardness of the heart, is a curse but rarely incurred by "women professing godliness." Those of them who are very inconsistent, may be safely regarded as unconverted. Still, it is a very awful thing, when a woman can give herself credit for being converted to God by the Holy Spirit, whilst all her religion consists in *talking* about religion. Unregeneracy is dreadful, even in a woman who is utterly ignorant of the great truths of the Gospel of Salvation: but it is absolutely horrible, when found in connexion with the knowledge and acknowledgment of these supreme truths. The very devils tremble at what they believe. The man or woman, therefore, who can believe all that is peculiar, inspiring, and solemn in the Gospel, and yet not obey that Gospel, is less affected by it than even Satan and his Angels. They, indeed, hate

it with perfect hatred; but still they stand in awe of it, and yield to it the homage of fear. How infatuated then must she be, whose religion begins and ends with hearing and talking of "the truth as it is in Jesus!" That truth is intended to rule both the tongue and the temper; to subdue the love of the world, and the love of ease; to turn sloth into activity, and selfishness into cheerful benevolence; and thus to make all whom it blesses, "a blessing" to others, to the full extent of their ability.

I want, by these hints, to make you as much afraid of not following the Lord fully, as you are of denying the Lord who bought you: as much shocked at partial obedience and heartless devotion, as at open infidelity. Now, you would not for worlds be sceptics nor scorners. Rather than apostatize from the truth as it is in Jesus, or than hold it in unrighteousness, you would do, give, and pray more than ever you have tried hitherto. Yes; were you quite sure, or even very suspicious, that the degree in which you are now following God in duty and

devotion, was no security against final apostacy, and no conclusive proof of saving piety, you would bestir yourself at once, and make a new effort to act up to your avowed principles.

Are you, then, quite sure that you have gone further in the narrow way, than "those who draw back unto perdition?" Is it beyond all doubt that you are following the Lord far enough, to prove that you have been "drawn by the cords of Love," and "led by the Spirit?" I do not at all question your sincerity, nor the correctness of your principles, so far as you do follow the Lord. My inquiry is, are *you* fully persuaded in your own mind, that you are diligent enough to "make your calling and election sure?" Does your own conscience bear you witness, that you are doing all those things, of which God saith, if ye do them, "you shall never fall?" Do *read* again the list of these essential things. 2 Peter i. 5—11. What; is it enough for you, that you remember the outline of the passage I have thus noted?

Do, then, remember that clause of it, (changing the pronoun,) *she* " that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that she was purged from her old sins." If you have any pretensions to sincerity, you will read again, now, the list itself; " Add to your faith virtue ; (that is, *courage* to avow and evince your faith ;) and to courage, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But (she) that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that (she) was purged from (her) old sins. Wherefore the rather give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

Now whatever else you fear or feel on reading this very solemn and heart-searching Ora-

cle, you are deeply conscious of, and concerned about, one thing;—that you may "*never fall.*" That has fixed your eye, and affected your heart. You cannot bear the idea of falling away from God entirely and finally. You may not be so fascinated by the prospect of "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," as for the sake of *that*, to add "all these things to your faith." You may even be so heartless about heaven, as to care little how you enter it, if you are only admitted at last: but you are not so lost to all right feeling, as to care nothing about missing that kingdom, or falling short of it. Well? make the *most* of this feeling, if it thus be the best and the strongest of your present religious emotions. It is a good feeling in itself; and, accordingly, the fear of falling away is often appealed to in the Scriptures. Rom. xi. 17, 22.

You do, then, fear apostacy. You are neither so "high-minded," nor so earthly-minded, as not to fear falling: nor so "double-

minded" as to pretend to be fearless. Well; so far, you are not "blind," even if you "lack" some of those things which constitute the security against falling. You do not, however, "see afar off" (are not *long-sighted*—do not look without *winking*) if you imagine that you can safely *continue* to lack any of these things. Each of them is an essential feature of that "Divine nature" or Holiness, without which you cannot see the Lord. It is by having them all in you, so as to "abound" in them, that "calling and election are made sure," and "never falling" certain.

Are you beginning to tire of this process of reasoning and remonstrance? It is not mine, remember! Alas, I feel it, like yourself, to be very strict, and even somewhat stern too. Again and again I have been tempted to shut my eyes upon some of the many things, thus inseparably linked together, and then laid altogether upon me, as necessary to keep me from falling. I have caught myself asking, "Cannot calling and election too be made

sure, without adding so many things to faith?" Can I not "stand" at less expense of time, thought, and effort? Who gives all this diligence, to make sure against falling? Do all fall, who "lack" any of these things? Have I not stood for years, although I have not abounded much in some of these virtues? Do I not see around me not a few, who are doing even less to stand than myself, and yet not at all afraid of falling, nor thought to be in any danger of it?"

Thus there are moments of temptation, and moods of temper, when one could almost fly into a passion, as well as get impatient, with the strait *meshes* of Peter's net. These tossings and twistings are not made, indeed, in order to escape from the Fisherman's net altogether. We do not want the liberty of those fishes which keep out of the gospel-net, nor of those "bad" ones which are sure to be "cast away," when it is drawn to the shores of Eternity: but we are, alas, prone to take more liberty than God sanctions.

How is this to be cured? It is a bad, yea, a dangerous disposition. Do not, however, make it *worse* than it really is. I mean,—do not conclude that all is wrong in your heart, because all is not yet right. Look not so exclusively upon the things which you lack, as to overlook entirely the things which you love in religion. You have no objection to do *some* of the things which are thus insisted upon, as securities against falling. Nay, there is not *one* of them you would throw out of the list, or set aside altogether. Consider: you would not "add to your faith, vice; nor to your virtue, ignorance; nor to your knowledge, intemperance; nor to your temperance, impatience; nor to your patience, ungodliness; nor to your godliness, unsisterly harshness; nor to your kindness, uncharitableness. The very idea of this change revolts you! You would not for worlds reverse the laws of holiness in this way. The exclamation, "What fellowship hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?" rushes from your heart to your

lips, the moment you glance at the glaring inconsistency.

There it is! I knew how the scale would turn, when you were fairly dealt with. It is not *immoral* freedom, that there is a craving for in your heart. You do not want a vice in the room of a virtue. Even the virtue you lack most, you do not exactly dislike. It is the trouble of *cultivating* it, that is the chief hardship to you. If virtue would grow out of faith, or knowledge out of virtue, or patience out of temperance, or godliness out of patience, or charity out of godliness, without any effort or care on your part, you would have but little objection to any of them. You would even be delighted to "abound" in them all, if they would only come and abide, of their own accord. For, you see no beauty in impatience, no attraction in anger, no loveliness in caprice or peevishness, and no benefit in your besetting sin. You would be very glad, if all that is wrong in your temper and conduct would go away, at once and for ever.

Thus we begin to get at the *secret* of our reluctance to some duties, and of our failure in some graces: they require more diligence than we like to bestow upon them. If the fruits of the Spirit would only grow and ripen as easily as the weeds of nature spring up and prevail, we should be quite pleased to bear a plentiful harvest of good fruit to the glory of God: but, finding that they are neither of spontaneous growth, nor of independent vitality: and that we must "*sow* unto the Spirit," if we would reap of the Spirit, we yield to sloth, or invent excuses for barrenness.

Here, then, is the point at which you must make a deliberate and solemn stand for your own safety, by giving all diligence to add to your faith, that virtue of character, or that grace of temper, which you lack most. You know well *what* it is. You have found by experience that it does not come of itself. You feel that the absence of it, throws doubt and darkness upon both your calling and election. You see how its continued absence must con-

tinue your suspense, and embitter, if not utterly darken, your dying moments. Will you not then make a determined stand, in order to add that to your faith, the want of which, not only weakens your faith, but also keeps you in doubt of its sincerity? O, leave it to the blind and the base to juggle on this matter, with the *dice-box* of presumptive election. You are not "sure" of your election of God, and never can be, whilst you make no resolute effort to crucify your besetting sin, or take no pains to acquire the fruits of the Spirit, which you lack most.

Do consider also, that it is really much easier to *excel* in the very thing you fail in most, than it is to repair, from Sabbath to Sabbath, the injury which that failure is for ever inflicting upon what is good about your character and spirit. Why; one half of the time, thought, and prayer which you must give, in order to get over the doubts and distress created by your besetting sin, would put an end to that sin. You do not escape from care

or labour, by leaving your chief fault to go on in its own way. The *Sacrament* comes round, and then you have to meet all the sad consequences of it there, or to pray them down by strong cries and tears in your closet. *Affliction* comes, and then you have to suffer under the painful consciousness that God is contending with you on account of that sin. Darkness and depression come, and then you find that it is the heaviest weight upon your spirits, and the eclipsing cloud upon your prospects. Thus you do any thing but save time or escape labour, by allowing your chief defect to prevail from year to year. The *running* account of its consequences must be settled, whenever the bills become heavy: and then they are not easily met, as you well know, and have often felt.

Another fact deserves your special attention; nothing vital or good in your principles or experience will go wrong, by concentrating and confining your care, for a time, to the acquirement of the one grace you lack most. No other fruit of the Spirit will fall off from the

branches of your profession, or cease to ripen, whilst you are giving all your diligence to add to them a fruit they have never borne yet. God will take care that the hope you derive from the cross, and the peace you obtain from the promises, and the help you get from ordinances, shall not stop nor diminish, whilst you are giving all your attention to set that right in your character, which you know to be wrong, and which He has often contended against. Nay; He will add to his care of the general interests of your soul, whilst you are adding to your faith that fruit, the want of which injures you, and dishonours him. Remember; you were no loser, when you began to follow Christ, by the pains you took to remedy what was worst in your case then: and, depend on it, you will lose nothing by taking the same course with what is worse now. No one ever went *back* in Christian experience or comfort, by a *set* effort to get forward in a neglected line of Christian character or temper.

These considerations cannot fail to have much weight with you. They are too solemn to be trifled with, and too just to be disputed. No admission of their truth, however, will answer any good purpose, unless they both reconcile and determine you to war and watch against your besetting sin. Nothing is gained by this heart-searching yet, if your heart still rise against a *diligent* cultivation of that fruit of the Spirit, which you lack most. You may feel ashamed; you may be very sorry; you may even condemn yourself very bitterly for your past neglect, and earnestly wish that what is wrong would "take wings and flee away:" but all this will not mend the matter. You may try a thousand plans to get clear of it; but it will cleave to you, until you are humble enough and honest enough, to take the Saviour's plan—"*cut* it off, and *cast* it from thee." No besetting sin, no darling idol, was ever overthrown, until this rough handling was applied to it. "This kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting."

Do these remonstrances seem to you at all legal, or too rigid? Would you be more pleased to be plied only with motives drawn from the love of Christ, and from the hope of salvation, and from the holy designs of free grace? You and I too have great need to be very careful, how we speak upon this subject. Neither cutting off, nor casting away, what is wrong, will be of any saving benefit, if not influenced by these saving truths. Indeed, the crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh, or of the mind, will not be willingly attempted nor long continued by any one, who is not glorying only in the Cross of Christ. But then—if our glorying in the Cross alone has not crucified us to the world in certain things, which we know to be wrong, how are we to get *rid* of them? Are they to be left standing out against law and conscience, because they do not yield to love or hope? May a bad temper or habit safely remain unsanctified, because a good hope through grace has not conquered it? True; nothing but more grace will ever conquer it

effectually; but, letting it alone in the meantime, is certainly not the way of obtaining more grace. God "giveth grace to the humble," and she is not very humble, who will not employ fears as well as hopes, and threatenings as well as promises, in order to promote her sanctification.

But do not take my opinion on this subject. Look again at Peter's argument. He gives the first place to the holy influence of the promises, upon the sanctification of believers. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises—that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." Thus the Apostle had no idea of any real sanctification, apart from the sweet influence of the sweetest consolations. But then, he immediately says, "BESIDE THIS, give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue," &c., &c. Thus there are things to do, as well as promises to believe, in order to the acquirement of a holy character. He even *warns* as well as woos believers to give all diligence.

How finely this agrees with both the letter and the spirit of the Saviour's counsels to his disciples. He warned them not only by the fear of falling, but also by the fear of Hell-fire. Even in His great Intercessory prayer for their sanctification, He did not say, "Sanctify them by thy promises;" nor did he say, "Sanctify them by thy threatenings;" but "by thy TRUTH: thy word is truth." Thus all truth, consolatory and conservative, cheering and checking, belongs to the means of sanctification. Accordingly, the great promise of the Holy Spirit, as the Sanctifier, is, "He shall lead you into all truth."

There is still another preservative against falling, which I must bring under your notice, and which you must lay to heart, if you would not fall. It is just as necessary that you should "take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand," as that you should add to your faith, the virtues and graces we have been contemplating. "For," as Sheshbazzar would have said, "fruit trees

must be *protected*, as well as cultivated. No wonder if a *tower* is wanted in a vineyard, seeing a *lodge* is needed even in a 'garden of cucumbers.'"

Now, however different our times and circumstances may be from those of the first Christians, they are not so different as to change the character or the spirit of personal piety. Neither the work nor the warfare of Faith ended, when Faith had no longer to "stop the mouths of lions" in the amphitheatre, nor to "quench the violence of fire" at the stake, nor to hide from the edge of the sword in "dens and caves of the earth." Piety did not cease to have enemies in the world, when the lions of persecution died: nor to have intimidations, when the fires of martyrdom were extinguished; nor to have hinderances, when the obscurity of the wilderness was exchanged for the publicity of the city, and the fellowship of mankind. That was, indeed, a great change of circumstances, for which we cannot be too mindful and thankful. The lines have fallen unto us

in pleasant places. We have "a goodly heritage," compared with that of the first followers of the Lamb. They had to follow him in "a howling wilderness," through fire and water. Compared to this, our lot is in a garden of Eden, where we can sit or walk with equal safety under our own vine and fig-tree; none daring to make us afraid. But still, if there be nothing in our national Paradise to hurt or destroy the body, there is much to peril the soul. There is both forbidden fruit and a tempting serpent in our Eden. And, alas, more disciples are drawn away from Christ now, by the pleasures and profits of the world, than seem to have been driven away from Him then by persecution. More "fall from their steadfastness" in this time of peace, than in that time of war.

Why is this? Many reasons could, no doubt, be assigned for the melancholy fact. The chief reason, however, is, that so many have either no deep fear of falling, or no adequate sense of what is necessary in order to

enable them to stand. They do not exactly care but little whether they stand or fall. They are neither reckless, nor altogether heedless, of consequences. It is their *wish*, "to stand against the wiles of the devil," and to "withstand in the evil day" of trial and temptation. They even *hope* to do so. And they are so conscious of meaning well, that they almost think ill of any one who is afraid lest they fall. "Fall, indeed! Why should they be suspected of treachery or unsteadiness? Did they not give good evidence, at their outset in the ways of God, that they were savingly converted? Did not experienced and judicious Christians assure them then, that a work of grace was begun in their souls, and would be carried on by the Holy Spirit unto the day of complete redemption? And, have they not kept their name and their place in the church, ever since, quite as well as the generality? Fall, indeed! Let him that thinketh he standeth better than they do, take heed lest *he* fall."

This is a wrong spirit certainly: and yet, I must confess, that the way in which some warn others against falling, is almost enough to provoke such a retort. There are Monitors who seem as if they would not be much surprised, nor even very *sorry*, if we did fall away. There are Reprovers who betray a mean suspicion of our *sincerity*, as well as a proper sense of our defects. There are also Counsellors, who, although they do not utter warnings in a spirit of pique or suspicion, are yet too caustic, or utter nothing but warnings. They caution others, as if grace were no great security against falling, even whilst it lasts; and even as if it might be all lost at any moment.

If Job's friends were "miserable comforters," such persons are miserable guides; and almost as dangerous as those who prophesy only "smooth things." It is, perhaps, difficult to say, whether those who prophesy harsh things only, or those who prophesy smooth things only, are most dangerous. One thing

is certain—they are both very unlike Christ, and both ignorant, alike, of the human heart. That, can neither be led on in holiness by fear only, nor kept from going back by hope only. Accordingly, those converts who are kept in perpetual dread of falling, obey without pleasure; and those who are taught that they cannot fall, disobey without much ceremony or compunction.

How do you feel on this subject? Whether do you take for granted that you shall not fall, or take measures to enable you to stand? On what security against falling away, do you lay hold oftenest and lean most? Not, I hope;—not, I pray!—on the *abstract* theory of final perseverance. Falling is begun, whenever a man or a woman, instead of *persevering* in prayer and watchfulness, presumes on safety without them. And when any one comes to argue his case thus,—"If I am decreed to be saved, I cannot be lost, whatever I neglect;' instead of praying over his case thus,—"Hold thou me up, and I shall

be safe;" he is fallen far, both from the doctrines and spirit of grace. He has then given up *known* Truth, for *unknown* Decrees Yea, he has ceased to *consult* God; and begun, if not exactly to defy Him, to alter his decrees, yet to tell him that, if there be a decree, He cannot alter it.

The cool effrontery of this calculation is horrible, just because it is so cool! It makes a *supposed* decree of the Eternal Mind suppress all the holy principles and feelings of the Eternal Mind. It sets against all the *present* will of God, the presumption that there has been a *past* act of the Divine will, which He is bound to abide by, whatever be the consequences to his law or his grace. The fatalism of the Mohammedans is nothing to this!

You are shocked at it. Well you may. Let it teach you, that the heart can be "desperately wicked," as well as "deceitful above all things." And, do not imagine, that nothing but gross sins can produce this fool-

hardiness. It springs oftener from losing the power of godliness, than from the loss of moral character. This dreadful game of hazard is more played at, by those who become lax in religious duty, than by those who are loose in morals. It is the *slothful*, not the sensual; the *worldly*, not the vicious, who try most to find out "byeways" to heaven. The sensual do, indeed, presume; but it is not upon *past* decrees being in their favour; but upon *future* displays of mercy, coming in time enough to save them. It is the slothful who try to believe, that there may be some Eternal purpose, which will prevent them from being lost. This is sad work! And, observe, how extremes meet in it: both classes are equally afraid of the *present* will of God. Neither can hope in Him, just as He *is* and *feels* at the moment. Both see that His immediate feelings must be against their conduct; and, therefore, the one class throw themselves upon the chance of former purposes, and the other upon the chance of future good-will.

You have not "so learned Christ!" When you repeat to yourself His promise, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish," you also remember His description of their character,—"My sheep hear my voice, and follow me, and a stranger will they not follow." Thus it is only the followers of Christ, who cannot be plucked out of his hands, nor out of the hands of the Father Accordingly, you see and feel that, were you to turn back, or to give up following the Saviour, you could have no more hold upon the power which *keeps* His flock "unto salvation," than they have who never professed or wished to be his sheep. This is well so far, because it is wise.

In what way, however, do you calculate upon Divine power keeping you from falling away from Christ, and thus keeping you from falling short of heaven? How do you expect this keeping power to act for your safety? How do you draw upon it for strength, to stand before trials and temptations? I mul-

tiply these questions, because that power acts by *rule* in preserving both the sheep and the lambs of Christ from apostacy, and thus from perishing. It keeps them "through *faith* unto salvation;" and not in spite of unbelief. It is not only "able to keep them from falling;" but it does so, by making them "able to stand." Its ability works by *enabling* them to be faithful unto death. The *law* of preserving power runs thus,—"Work out your own salvation; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

These distinctions are neither too nice, nor too numerous. God has made them; and, therefore, you are bound to mark them. You have no right to turn away from them peevishly or impatiently, saying, "I can stand well enough without so much attention to rules, or to the relation of doctrines. I do not want to be a theologian!" Well; most certainly I do not wish to make you one. You want, however, to be kept from falling; and

that, you cannot be, but by being *enabled* to stand; and that you will not be by God, but in his own way of exercising keeping power. You are not, therefore, so intent upon standing, nor so afraid of falling, as you give yourself credit for, if you give yourself no trouble about the way in which God keeps his children, through faith unto salvation. He says to them all, more than that he is *able* to keep them from falling; more than that "he is *faithful*, and will do it." He commands them all thus: "Take unto you the WHOLE ARMOUR of God, that ye may be *able* to stand." Yes; this is necessary, if you would wrestle successfully, either with flesh and blood, or with the powers of darkness. Satan will put on the whole armour of his power against you; and the world will put on the whole armour of its snares against you: and your old nature will put on the whole armour of its depravity against you: how then can you stand in the evil day of their joint or single assault, if you do not "put on the whole armour of God?" Eph. vi. 10.

Did this sacred Oracle ever strike you before? It contains the whole history and mystery of that familiar maxim, "Ye stand by faith;" and of that familiar warning, "Take heed lest you fall." Indeed, you cannot obey the one nor the other, as God enjoins them, without taking unto you the whole armour of God.

"But that armour is so much!" you will say. True; but it is not more than your temptations and tendencies to fall. There are, indeed, six parts of it;—the girdle of Truth—the breastplate of Righteousness—the greaves of peace—the shield of Faith—the helmet of Salvation—the sword of the Spirit—besides All-prayer and Watchfulness: but, which of them could you do without? Which of them could you wield or wear effectually without the others?

Look twice at this question, before you attempt to answer it. Without the girdle of Truth, you may fall into error. Without the breastplate of Righteousness, you may fall

into legality. Without the shoes of the Gospel of Peace, you may fall into despondency. Without the shield of Faith, you may fall into apostacy. Without the helmet of Salvation, you may fall into despair. Without the sword of the Spirit, you may fall into cowardice. And without Prayer and Watching, you may fall into any thing, however bad or dangerous. Thus, if you will number up the ways in which others have fallen, or even the dangers to which you yourself are exposed, you will not say again, that "the whole armour of God" is too much or too varied.

Nor is it *cumbersome*, even as a whole. It may seem so at first sight, because it seems something additional, if not different, to the means by which you have been able to stand hitherto. But this is in appearance only. You have had it *all on before* now; and you never found the service of God so easy, nor the salvation of God so sweet, as when you were clothed with the whole armour of God. I mean, that there have been times when you

have believed, and hoped, and prayed, and watched, and warred, and worked, with all your heart; thus doing all you could, to stand. Now although you did not call this care, "putting on the whole armour of God," it really was so: and, accordingly, you stood by doing so. For, where, what, had you been, at the close of some evil days of temptation, if you had not made an effort to resist Satan, and to renounce the world, and to deny yourself? You, of course, think more of the grace which enabled you to make that timely and necessary stand, than of the stand itself. And so do I. But still, it is the *stand*, which shows *how* "grace helps in time of need." What it enables us to do and endure, is the measure of what it does for us, and the mode in which it helps our infirmities.

Do not tire of this formal advice. I would have you "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might;" and, therefore, I urge upon you, to "take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand;"

and tell you, at the same time, that this means no more than you *ought* to mean, when you say, that your own strength is insufficient, and grace essential, in order to your standing. I will go further and say, that the advice given in this oracle is just as kind and cheering, as when God says in another of his oracles, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.' This is, indeed, what He says to them when their "warfare is accomplished;" and the other what He says whilst the warfare is going on; but both are in the same spirit, and equal proofs of His attention to all who are engaged in the Christian warfare! He arms the warrior, as well as crowns the conqueror; and gives grace as willingly, as He will give glory cheerfully.

Look again at the whole armour of God, in proof of this. Why; every part of it proclaims as much *peace* to you, as it proclaims war against sin and Satan. If you must wear a helmet, it is "the hope of salvation," not the fear of perishing. If you must wield a sword,

it is "the sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God; and by that, Christ vanquished Satan in the wilderness. If you must employ a shield, it is the faith of the glorious Gospel, not the Buckler of fasts, penances, sackcloth, or celibacy. The Righteousness which you are bound to put on as a breastplate, is what you wish to be found clothed in, as a robe, on the last day. And what is prayer, but access to God as your Father? Yea, what is watching, but taking care of the hope, and the peace, and the joy of salvation?

Thus, doing "all to stand," is far more than duty. To stand firm, is, to stand safe; to stand composed; to stand prepared for the issues of life or death. SHESHBAZZAR would have said, "it is to stand as the mountains around Jerusalem, or as the cherubim on the mercy-seat; where the eye of Omniscience watches, and the arm of Omnipotence guards."

Take another view of these preservatives

against falling. You want and wish for the *whole* guardianship of God on earth. I mean, you would not be satisfied with less, than being "kept by his power through faith unto salvation." Such a keeping from the evil of the world, as would not keep you from being condemned with the world, would not please you. No wonder! Should not God, then, be pleased as well as you? Ought He not to have his own way, if you wish him to save you with an everlasting salvation? You need the whole of His grace, and wish for the whole of His glory: and, will you refuse to take the whole armour of God, in order to secure all this to yourself?

You feel this appeal! Do then *take* that armour, and take it unto *yourself*, and "put it on." What is the use of merely knowing, that there is a breast-plate, a helmet, a sword, and a shield, by which a Christian may be able to stand? What is the use of complimenting their power as great, or their polish as splendid, or their device as beautiful? If you need them,

take them: if you admire them, *put them o*
They are not like the armour in the TOWER
London, hung up to be gazed at, or to remir
us of the good soldiers which Christ had
former times. He wants good soldiers still
and, as formerly, "women" amongst them, wl
will not accept "deliverance" from the cru
mockings of the world, nor from the scourg
of Satan at the expense of a good conscienc

No. V.

VARIETIES, FROM MISTRUST.

Is it your desire to glorify God? You know and confess that it is your duty. There are also some ways of glorifying God on earth, which you would be glad to try, if you had the means. Were you wealthy enough to found a Mission in China, where the Gospel was never fully preached; or in Asia, where its golden candlestick has long been extinguished; or in the yet unvisited wilds and islands of Africa and the Pacific; would not you help to fill the earth with the glory of God? Were you even wealthy enough to relieve (without injury to yourself) all the real poverty in your neighbourhood, and thus to bring all the poor under the Gospel, would you not count that way of glorifying God to be both duty and pleasure?

Or, could you write a book in favour of the Gospel, which would command as much attention, and take as strong a hold upon the public mind, as the works of Shakspeare or Milton, would you not feel bound to trade with that talent at once, and thus to glorify God with your spirit, by pouring all its intellectual wealth and splendour around the Cross? Or, were it only signified to you, as to Peter, "by what death you should glorify God," would you not prepare for that death with much diligence, that thus your triumph or tranquillity might illustrate and commend the power of faith?

None of these things, upon this scale, may be within your power. There is, however, one way of glorifying God, which is completely within your reach, and would remain so, even if you were in abject poverty, or had only a weak mind: for God condescends to consider himself glorified, by "strong faith." We learn this pleasing fact, from the history of Abraham. "He staggered not at the

promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory unto God."

Perhaps you are ready to say,—"I feel as unequal to exercise strong faith, as I am unable to bestow much charity. There is nothing so weak in my piety, as my faith. I have, at times, strong convictions, strong fears, strong desires; but strong faith, I am a stranger to. I can say at any time, with the poor man in the Gospels, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief:" but I cannot always preface this prayer as he did, by saying, "Lord, I believe." Indeed, I hardly know what to think of myself, when I examine whether I am in the faith. I can neither class myself with Believers, nor with Unbelievers. I have not the real peace of the former, nor the false peace of the latter. The state of my mind seems something *between* both. Besides, I become fluttered, and confused, and intimidated, whenever I go far into the question of saving faith."

You are not singular in all this. Many feel exactly as you do on this point. Indeed, all

Christians, are, at times, more or less embarrassed on the subject of faith. In general, however, those who are most jealous and fearful of the genuineness of their own faith, have *least* occasion to be so. Perhaps this is the case with you? I do not throw out this hint, that you may drop the question, nor that you may take for granted the reality of your own faith in Christ: but that you may sit down with composure to examine "whether you be in the faith."

Now the weakness of your faith may, perhaps, arise, in part, from your being somewhat afraid of *strong* faith. We are not always thinking of Abraham, when we think of the faith of assurance. They are not often *very like him*, in character or spirit, who *say* most about their assurance. In general, those who are most like him in humility and holiness, say least about their own faith: and even the little they do say, is uttered in the spirit in which Abraham prayed,—"Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak." Thus, between

the "much speaking," of those who are least humble, and the almost silence of those who are most humble, we are in no small danger of becoming rather suspicious of the tendency of strong faith itself. Whilst we look at it, and judge of it, in Abraham or in Paul, or in the death-song of "such an one as Paul the aged," we feel no more doubt of its holy tendency, than of its happy influence. In the presence of such examples, we catch ourselves exclaiming,

> "O for a strong, a lasting faith,
> To credit what th' Almighty saith;
> To trust the merits of His Son,
> And call the joys of heaven my own."

Not thus, however, do we judge or feel, when professors, remarkable for nothing but *talking* about their experience, speak of their assurance, and security, and cloudless hopes. Their strong faith seems very much akin to presumption. We cannot help feeling as if it were both better and safer, to be weak in

faith, than to be strong in *their* way of believing. Besides, it is a very general persuasion amongst those whose piety is most exemplary, that the faith of assurance is sail, which very few have ballast enough to carry, or prudence to manage well.

Now, I readily grant that these are facts which ought not to be overlooked, nor allowed to have but little weight, on this subject. Caution is, indeed peculiarly becoming on such a point as saving faith. Yea, it is necessary: for there are presumers in the Church, as surely as there are sceptics in the world. But, after honestly weighing all these facts, I cannot forget that God and the Lamb *deserve* strong faith. I frankly confess that I cannot answer the question,—Why should I have *less* faith in God than Abraham had? The God of Abraham is not changed in truth or love. What He promises in answer to prayer, under the Gospel, is not less free or faithful than what He promised under the Abrahamic covenant. God is not a man that he should lie;

nor the son of man, that he should repent. He proved this by fulfilling the great promise of that covenant. At the fulness of time, He sent forth his Son to redeem the world from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for them. We ought not, therefore, to be very slow of heart in believing, that He that spared not his own Son, but "gave him up to the death for us all," will also, "with him, freely give us all things." This would, indeed, be believing a great deal: but still, not more than God has promised; not more than God is able to perform; not more than He has actually performed to millions and myriads, who were as guilty and unworthy as we can be.

I must, therefore, press and ply you with the question, Do not God and the Lamb *deserve* strong faith from you? Can you assign any *reason*, why you should stagger at their promise, through unbelief, or fear, or suspicion? You certainly cannot assign nor conceive one reason for doubt, if God and the

Lamb allow sinners to put as much faith in their promises, now, as they allowed Abraham to put: and that, they do both warrant and command! God does not, indeed, speak so openly to us as he did to Abraham; but He speaks as *honestly*, and even more explicitly. He does not call us by name, nor with an audible voice from heaven; but He does better: He puts into our hands the written copy of the everlasting covenant, ratified by his own oath and the blood of his Son, pledging all the eternal honour of the Godhead, that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish.

Now, really this strong assurance from the lips of God, deserves strong faith. For, what could He say or do more, in order to warrant implicit and imperishable faith in His promises? We really ought to be ashamed, yea shocked, at the bare idea of placing but little faith in them, seeing they are so great, so precious, and so true. Why; if you cannot trust them, what could you trust?

What could be so satisfactory as the assurance, that "it is impossible for God to lie?" This fact,—all history, all experience, all the universe rises up to attest and confirm. Neither voice nor vision from heaven, could amount to so much encouragement as this one fact. I must, therefore, repeat, that strong promises from the God of truth and love, deserve strong faith; nor can we have any good reason for withholding it from them.

I know quite well what you are now thinking about. You have been ready to say again and again, whilst reading this Essay,—"But how can I be sure that the promises are meant for me? They are the children's bread; and I am not sure that I am a child of God. They belong to the penitent, the humble, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and I am afraid to class myself amongst them. Besides, I find no difficulty in believing firmly the truth of the promises themselves, or their faithfulness in the

case of others: my difficulty is, to believe them in my own case. It is *there*, that my faith staggers."

Yes; and well it may stagger, if you thus want to be sure of your calling and election, before you venture to believe the glad tidings of the Gospel. You are, indeed, perfectly right in your opinion that, in general, the promises belong to specific characters, and are adapted and addressed to certain spiritual states of mind. Of this fact, you ought never to lose sight. Whoever regards all the promises as made to mankind promiscuously, understands neither their excellency nor their design. The greater part of them are, emphatically and exclusively, "the children's bread." There are, however, many of them (and these neither weak nor equivocal) the only and express object of which is, to multiply the children of God, or to win sinners to become the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Yes; one class of the great and precious promises are entirely occupied

with the manifestation of that matchless love which God bestows, in order that we may be made his children. Nor is this all: the whole of them have it as much for their object to reconcile the world unto God, as to endear God to the Church.

Consider this fact, and remember it. It will clear your way, mightily and rapidly, to the point at which all the promises can be appropriated and enjoyed by yourself. What you have now to believe with a strong faith, is not your own election, adoption, or conversion. You cannot, and ought not, to believe these things firmly, until you have more evidence of their truth, in your own experience. Strong faith on these points, can only be warranted by the fruits of faith in your heart and life. But whilst this is true, it is equally true, that even now, and as you are, and however you feel, there are both great and precious promises which you are fully warranted to believe, with all the faith of assurance. The promise, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock,

and it shall be opened," belongs as much to you, and deserves your entire faith, as the promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," belongs to the dearest children of God. What more, therefore, would you have, in order to warrant and welcome you to hope in Christ for your own salvation? God says, "You shall find," if you seek: "it shall be opened," if you knock. Unless, therefore, you want to find without seeking, or to be admitted into the household of faith without knocking, your way is as open as promises can make it.

If this view of the matter do not remove your difficulty, you have, in some way, mistaken the nature of faith itself, as well as the character of strong faith. It may be, that one cause of the weakness of your faith, is, that you tried at first, to believe more than was *necessary* at first; and thus by grasping at every thing in the Gospel at once, you got a firm hold upon nothing. I do not throw out this hint in the way of reproof at all; but just

to throw you back upon first principles, and in upon your own recollections. I know too well, (to wonder or blame,) how naturally your mind desired all the comforts and securities of the covenant of grace, when you first saw all your wants and dangers. You then wished to be sure of your election, sure of your adoption, sure of your pardon, sure of your acceptance, sure of your union to Christ, sure of your participation of the Spirit, and sure of your final perseverance. You saw your need of all this; and, therefore, you sought for all this, and tried to believe all the promises in which this host of spiritual blessings are presented to the Church. But your faith was too weak. You were not able to believe so much for yourself! Can you wonder, now that you look at the case in this light? Do you not see, that the *infant-hand* of faith cannot grasp so much at once? Is it not obvious, that by thus trying to lay hold on every thing, it can get no sure hold upon any thing? Just suppose, for a moment, that, instead of this, you had set

yourself to believe *one* point in the Gospel, at first. Suppose that point had been the promise, that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" or the assurance, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Either of these great truths is quite sufficient to give any sinner a good hope through grace; or, at least, to create hope enough to keep him praying: and that (every Christian will tell you) is the best kind and degree of hope, eventually. Now, do you not see how your faith, if it had confined itself at first to the willingness of God and the power of Christ to save you, might have soon become strong faith? Consider: the willingness of God, and the ability of the Lamb, are not doubtful nor dark truths. If any thing be clear or sure, they are unquestionable and resplendent facts. Their strong evidence is calculated to produce strong faith. They win the confidence they ask for, when they are duly weighed. Well; *this* is the GOSPEL! This is just what a sinner should believe, when

seeking mercy through the blood of Atonement. His language should be, "God is willing, and Christ is able, to save even me." Why then should not you go back to this point, if, after all your efforts to get higher, you are still in doubt as to the reality of your faith? Why not try for a time what you can make of believing these two truths? Until you have strong faith in them, your faith in every other part of the Gospel must remain very weak.

What! is it but weak here also? Do you not believe that God is *willing* to save you? Do you really doubt the ability of Christ to deliver you from the wrath to come? If so—you must be very unhappy whenever you think of your own case. I would not, for worlds, doubt either truth. My heart would break, or my reason expire, if I suspected that God was unwilling or Christ unable to save me. But, as they have not said so, I do not suspect the willingness of the Father, nor the power of the Son. Why should

I suspect either, when neither *forbid* me to hope? Nothing short of a *prohibition* to hope, could warrant despair: and as there are express commands, as well as beseeching invitations, to hope in Christ, despair and despondency must be as criminal as they are unwise.

No. VI.

VARIETIES, FROM MODESTY.

It is both gratifying and encouraging to be able to trace in our own character and spirit, any real resemblance to those who are truly pious. Any likeness we bear to "the excellent of the earth," helps us to hope that we are not altogether strangers to the grace which made them so excellent. We see and deplore the sad difference there is between them and ourselves, and sometimes feel discouraged as well as reproved by it, because we can hardly see how we can ever come up to their standard: but still, we cling to the fond hope, that we have something of their spirit, or a spark of the same grace. We cherish this hope the more freely, because our conscience bears us witness, that we really desire to be more like

the Christians we admire most, and would be very glad to get over that in which we chiefly differ from them.

Another thing very encouraging, is, that we can trace some resemblance between their early experience and our own. Few things, perhaps, please or surprise us more than the discovery, that some of the loveliest and most happy Christians had to struggle hard, at first, with many of the same doubts, fears, and temptations which now harass us. This, we did not expect to find in the experience of the very holy and happy. We imagined that, from the first, their conversion must have been so complete, as to place them above all such conflicts between the flesh and the spirit. We took for granted, that they had never found it difficult to believe, or to hope, or to pray. This difficulty we thought peculiar to ourselves. And, as to treachery of heart, weakness of purpose, changeableness of feeling, and floods of vain and unholy thoughts, we were almost sure that no real Christian had ever felt as

we did. We heard, of course, our pious friends speak of their having had to go through deep and dark waters, and to sustain some heavy burdens: but we did not allow ourselves to suspect that unbelief, or the prevalence of a wrong spirit, or the pressure of temptation entered into their trials. We thought that they could only mean, the trial of their faith and patience, by afflictions or losses: not by the plagues of the heart, or by the treachery of the conscience.

It was, therefore, no small help to us, when we found out that "no strange thing had befallen" us, in having to struggle so much against fightings without and fears within. We were not, of course, glad that others had hearts as bad as our own, nor that grace met with much opposition in all hearts: but we were glad to know the fact itself. It proved to us, that our case was neither desperate nor singular: and thus prevented us from giving up all hope and effort, as useless in our own case. It showed us, that the day

of small things ought not to be despised; seeing it had often been followed by years of great things in the experience, character, and career of many.

We have then been somewhat encouraged by discovering, that the beginnings of our piety, had parallels in the early experience of the best. Did it ever occur to you, whilst marking this with pleasure, that just in proportion as you are of "one spirit" with the saints on earth, you are of "one spirit" with the saints in *heaven* also? If you have never followed out this sweet thought for your own encouragement, it is well worth your while to do so now. The fact is fraught and fragrant with strong consolation, to all who are anxious to be sure that they have been "made to drink into one Spirit" with the children of God on earth: for, if the persuasion that you had done *this* would cheer you, how much more cheering to discover that your best principles and desires are in *harmony* with the leading principles of the whole family in

heaven? You are quite sure that their views and feelings and desires are right. You see at a glance, that they cannot err nor mistake. And, do you not see also, that so far as your spirit resembles theirs, even you are right too? Consider this. The great principles which prevail in heaven are not natural on earth; do not spring up by accident in the human mind; nor can they be learnt, so as to be loved, by human means. Whoever loves them, has been taught by the Spirit of God. You have as certainly been illuminated and led by Him, if you try to think and feel and act towards the Saviour as the saints in glory do, as these saints have been perfected by the Holy Spirit. Yes; the same hand that completed their sanctification, has begun your sanctification, if you are trying to enter into the spirit of heavenly principles.

Do not say, on reading this, that neither your principles nor feelings will bear to be tried by a *heavenly* standard. It is not so true as it is plausible, that, if some *earthly* stand-

ards of piety make you ashamed and even afraid of yourself, comparison with perfect spirits must overwhelm your hopes altogether. This is plausible, but it is not true. In some things, indeed, it is only too true, that you bear none of the image, and breathe none of the spirit of the family in heaven; and in nothing are you *very* like them. There is some pride even in your deepest humility: some sloth in your most cheerful obedience: and much weakness in your strongest faith and love. I neither forget nor palliate this, in you or myself. We may well hide our heads in the dust, when we compare ourselves with holy men and women of old, even when they were not *perfect;* and, now that they are holy as God is holy, or "without spot before the throne," we may well shrink, and that not a little, from all comparison with them. Indeed, as to the *degree* of their holiness, there is no comparison between us and them: it is all contrast or dissimilarity.

You see clearly, that I am not about to flatter or compliment you. As, however, I must tell you plainly that, if you "have not the spirit of Christ, you are none of His," I feel equally bound to remind you, that whatever you have of it, is really a part of heavenly piety, and as truly likeness to the saints above, as it is to the saints below. Now, I remind you of this fact, because whatever agreement you may be able to trace out between your own spirit and their spirit, will be more easily traced up to the Holy Spirit, than even the points in which your experience resembles that of Christians on earth. For, do you not see, that if you think at all, feel at all, desire at all, as saints and angels do in heaven, there must have been some *heavenly* influence shed upon your heart, and some *Divine* change passed upon your spirit? For as neither saints nor angels have taught you their creed or their emotions, and as you did not begin your piety by trying to copy their example, all real participation in their great

principles must have sprung from Divine teaching.

This conclusion is not so easily drawn, and cannot be so safely drawn, from your resemblance to your pious friends on earth. I do not say that it is *unsafe* to draw it from likeness to them. I have already shown, that it is both useful and encouraging to do so at first. It is not, however, the surest ground to go on: for as we do not know the *heart* of any man or woman fully, we cannot be absolutely certain that likeness to them is conversion to God. In the case of glorified spirits, however, there is no room for any hesitation. We are absolutely sure of their sincerity, simplicity, and perfection: and therefore, if we have any real fellow-feeling with them, we have real evidence of having passed from death to life.

Is there then any thing in your HUMILITY akin to *their* humility? They veil their faces before God: they fall down before the throne: and even when they stand around the throne of God and the Lamb, they sing of nothing but

the wonders of the grace which brought them to glory. Now this, all this, you intend to do when you join their company. Like them you will be glad to have eternity all before you, and the throne all open to you, in order to express, for ever, your adoring wonder and gratitude, that one so unworthy as yourself should have been put among the children and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Well; is there any thing of this spirit in your humility now? Does your conscience bear you witness, that you lie low before God in the dust of self-abasement; that you are ashamed, and pained, and burdened, on account of your sins and short comings; that you can hardly bear to think of your own vileness and weakness, nor see how you can ever forgive yourself; that you feel at times as if your heart would break, and your soul melt within you, through heaviness and shame, because of your guilt and ingratitude? This is the humility, in an earthly form, of the saints in heaven. They, indeed, no longer

weep, nor groan, nor sigh, nor blush, in the presence of God. His hand has wiped away all tears from their eyes, and his smile banished all pain from their hearts: but this wonderful love has only deepened their humility. The very absence of all sorrow and sighing, leads their spotless spirits to pour out the fulness of their gratitude, with as much modesty as rapture. Their most *breathless* pauses of wonder and joy occur, when they remember what they were on earth! Thus they are all as fully "clothed with humility," as with the white robes of righteousness and holiness.

Now, although the degree of their humility is, of course, inimitable on earth, the *kind* of it is not so. To be ashamed and bowed down in spirit by the remembrance of sin, is real humility in heaven and on earth. And, are not you so? O, yes, if a sense of guilt and unworthiness lie heavy on your heart, you have drunk into the same spirit, which leads all the armies of the Redeemed to prostrate their crowns, and to fall on their faces, before the

eternal throne. And this is not less true, if you are chiefly pained and ashamed, because your penitence is not so humble as you feel it ought to be. Your humility would not be genuine, if you were quite satisfied with its depth. The best part of it, is your sense of its defects as a whole, and your desire to sink lower in all lowliness of mind before God.

Well; what do you think now of your own penitence, after having thus looked at heavenly penitence? Of course, you are more ashamed of its imperfections than ever. So you ought. But still, you are conscious of some fellow-feeling with the Church of the first-born in heaven. You also wish for more of their meek and lowly spirit. It commends itself to both your judgment and your taste. Your heart does not rise against it, as something repulsive or mortifying. You can say with truth, "Blessed are they that mourn." Well; what is all this, but proof that you have been taught of God, and thus that you are training up for the perfect and eternal humility of heaven?

all," to all the armies of heaven. The
angels, who need no Saviour, *desire* to
into the sufferings of Christ, and the
which shall for ever follow them. Did
ever mark the distinction which angels
make between the sufferings of Christ,
every thing else they study or admire ?
nothing else is it said, that they "desi
look into it. They do look into every
which the universe presents to their n
Their eye ranges the whole array of the
of Creation and Providence, and trie
doubt, to penetrate the arcana of both.
are as full of eyes to discern and enj

visible and invisible. In the midst—of universal Providence; for by Him all things are upheld and regulated. In the midst—of universal Government; for he is Head over all things; thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, being subject to him. In the midst—of universal knowledge; for "the Lamb is the light" of heaven. In the midst—of universal Glory; for He is the source and centre of all the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." By looking into His sufferings, therefore, angels see every thing else, in its true character and chief design: for the *full meaning* of all things, is seen through the "rent veil" of His humanity, and only through it. Indeed, apart from the atonement, the moral order of the universe is all mystery, and the light of nature all darkness, in heaven itself as well on earth: for *one* thing is for ever going on in heaven, which neither suns nor systems, laws nor oracles, can explain—the peopling of Heaven with the reconciled and sanctified *enemies* of God, from the earth.

suns wheeling around the magnetic cer
creation, or both flashing their sple
upon the vacant spaces of infinity; cor
with immortal spirits, once earthly and u
and alienated; but now, in the image of
advancing to the throne of God, and ta
place and a part before it, which Angels
selves might covet? Who can wonde
Angels should desire to look into the *ca*
this wonderful consummation? There
thing like this, amongst all the ongoi
results of visible or invisible things. Th
the moral image of God multiplying
now that physical creation has stoppe
magnifying itself more than *another* c

of all worlds, as to keep the new song for ever new, and the universe its widening, willing, welcoming temple. It is in gratitude, and from a deep sense of unspeakable obligation, and not in compliment nor from custom,—that all Angels cry aloud, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." He is of more *worth* to them—than all the glories of creation; than all the wisdom of Providence; than all the wealth of eternity: for He *alone* is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Only in Christ crucified is the *heart* of God fully unveiled; and as their chief happiness must for ever spring from His love, Angels may well sing, "Worthy the Lamb;" seeing the Lamb is both the mirror and the miracle, the Alpha and Omega, of the paternal love of their God and our God, of their Father and our Father! Now, how far do you sympathize with them, in this preference and pleasure? How *near* are you "come to the innumerable company of Angels," in thus recognising and admiring the

Lamb "in the midst" of every thing, and as the glory of all things? Mark well both your sentiments and emotions, now that you see all angelic eyes turned to Him, and hear all angelic harps tuned to Him, equally as "to Him that sitteth upon the throne!"—"What think ye of Christ?"—How do you *feel* toward Him? Are you gratified—delighted—stimulated by the love and allegiance, the homage and gratitude, thus given to the Saviour by all the heavenly hosts? If so—you have "drank into the same spirit" with them. How *else* could you enter into, and participate in, their highest views and holiest feelings? Nature does not teach these lessons, even in Heaven: who then but the SPIRIT could have taught you on earth?

Thus, it was not in compliment at all, nor in prophecy merely, that Paul said to believers, "Ye are come to an innumerable company of Angels." He was stating a fact in Christian experience, as sober as it is sublime. We "are come" to the same *conclusions*, as Angels, in

regard to the Godhead, the glory, and the grace of the Saviour. We "are come" to the same *resolution* as Angels, to crown Him, Lord of all." We "are come" to the same *maxim* as Angels, to desire to look into the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

This is no accident! This is not one of the forms which a refined taste or a powerful imagination can give to the desires of the heart. No, indeed: it is not in this direction, that genius leads, or that mere education can draw, the affections of the soul. The Holy Spirit has come near, both as a Teacher and a Sanctifier, to the soul, that comes thus near to the innumerable company of angels, in thought and feeling.

Whatever encouragement there is in this view of Christian experience, will be increased, by tracing our resemblance to the spirits of just men made perfect. For we "are come" still *nearer* "to the general assembly and Church of the first-born," than to Angels, in our love and gratitude, if we have really come

by faith "to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Our first prayerful and penitential approach to Him for salvation, made us *one* with all the Redeemed in heaven, exactly in proportion as it made Him "all in all" in our hopes; and every subsequent attempt to "wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb," has brought us *nearer* to the forms and spirit of their grateful worship.

Be not afraid to look at this fact! It is the *fact* in your own case,—if you have come to Christ himself. Besides, you expect to come, at last, into the society of all the Saved, and to come *up* to all the height of their love and gratitude. You cannot relinquish this hope, Indeed, one great reason why you cling to this hope, is, because you feel quite sure that, should you reach heaven, there is nothing you would not do, willingly and warmly, in order to express, before the throne, your

"Wonder, love, and praise!"

And then, you do not leave these altogether

unexpressed, until you are in heaven. You could not keep up any hope of joining in the New Song there, if you did not try to sing it here. You could not postpone all your gratitude to the Saviour, until you see Him as he is. The shortness of time, as well as the length of Eternity, is a reason, with you, for trying to do and feel now, something of what you intend then.

You are right! Well; nothing will help you more in this good habit, than marking how near you have already come to the *spirit* of the General Assembly of the Redeemed. The resemblance will gratify, without at all flattering you; and confirm your hope of final safety, without relaxing your present diligence. Do not doubt this. Do not even shrink from it. Consider: you would be very uneasy, and very much alarmed too, if you had *no* fellow-feeling with the saints in heaven. Did your heart loathe, or your spirit spurn, their sentiments and emotions, you would suspect that a seared conscience, if not a reprobate mind, was setting

in upon you. No wonder! Well; if you deem it thus essential, to hold all their creed, and to cherish something of their spirit, why not mark, exactly, how far you accord with them? This is not so slight a matter, that it can be safely taken for granted without any examination; or settled by a passing glance. Come!—rise to the importance, and solemnity, and sublimity of having fellowship of *spirit* with the spirits, amongst whom you desire and hope to spend your Eternity! Look at them—listen to them —place yourself in their room, whilst they identify themselves as *one* Church, redeemed by the same sacrifice, and thus sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain for Us:" and yet vie with each other in singing, "Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*, and washed *me* from my sins in his own blood." You can imagine the holy rivalry—the humble emulation—the varied and yet equal emphasis, with which this song is sung by spirits, each of whom considers its own salvation, as the most *undeserved* of all the wonderful salvations of others.

Do you feel that you could take up the New Song in this way? Is this—just what your "heart inditeth" and designs, and *quivers* with, when you venture to realize your own entrance into heaven—your own first appearance before the throne—your own first sight of the Saviour—your own first burst of

"Wonder, love, and praise!"

In anticipating this, does your spirit feel how it must, alternately and eternally, break away from all spirits, into the *melody*, "Slain for me;" and fall with them all, into the *harmony*, "Slain for us?" This is not accident, nor from the excitement of the moment. You must have gone through this train of thought, and risen to this tone of feeling, before now. The *chord* of both must have been in your heart for some time, seeing my touch can make it vibrate thus! Again I say, I am not *complimenting* you. I am only congratulating you; and that only in order to endear the Holy Spirit, who led your spirit thus far into meet-

ness "for the inheritance of the saints in light."

But why should your resemblance to them stop here? This is, indeed, a fine and essential portion of their spirit: but just because it is so, the more need, and the more reason, and the more encouragement you have, to catch other portions of it. This love to the Saviour, should be associated with love to all who love him and bear his image. And as He does not count *you* unworthy of His love, what Christian can be *unworthy* of your love? This question is not wanted in heaven. There, all love and live as brethren. No distinction of honour or office, of rank or reward, divides the General Assembly of the Church triumphant. "One star differeth from another star, in glory;" but, like the Morning Stars, they all sing together, and shine together, and move in harmony. There is no star "Wormwood" in all the galaxy of glory.

True; it is easy to love all, where all are so lovely. You could, of course, wear the

smile of cordial good will, and wave the hand of complacent satisfaction, towards any spirit around the throne. You may have partialities but you have no *prejudices*, when you look within the veil. Nature, you feel, will draw you first and chiefly, to your own family and personal friends, even in heaven; but Grace, you feel also, will draw you with equal sincerity, if not with equal delight, into any circle, and into all the circles, of the Redeemed from amongst men. You cannot conceive of a spirit you would not like to know, or that you would be ashamed to acknowledge there.

Well; the will of God ought to be done on earth, as it is in heaven. The difficulty of doing it, here, does not lessen the obligation to do it. Nay; brotherly and sisterly love is more wanted *here*, than it is in heaven. I mean that, if you could easily love any one there, every one there could be happy without your love: for no one needs it, in order to enjoy heaven, nor in order to bear the eternal weight of glory well. But this is not true of

all your fellow-Christians on earth. Some of them need both sympathy and help, in order to be faithful unto death; and all of them deserve affectionate notice, in order to be useful in life. And, what am I—or who are you—that we should care nothing about our brethren? If those we stand aloof from have faults,—so have we: and if God were to treat us for *our* offences against himself, as we treat them for their offences against us, how should we like it—what would be the consequence?

Besides; are there none in your neighbourhood, very low in life—very straitened in circumstances—very much exposed to temptation, just because of heavy trials; but who really have "the root of the matter" in them, notwithstanding all these things? And, are you ashamed or afraid to notice and own them, as Christians? True; they may not do much credit to Christianity, whilst they hardly know how to "make the ends meet" in life. But if you look down on them—if you withhold from them all countenance and counsel,—if they

may sink or swim for any thing you care,—who *risks* the credit of Christianity most?

Do, ask yourself often, how you could *meet* in heaven, without shame, some whom, notwithstanding all their faults, you expect and wish to meet there? True; they will not upbraid you when they meet you before the throne. The *neglected* will not say—You used to pass me even at the sacrament, without condescending to speak or look to me. Those who "came out of great tribulation," will not say,—"I was sick, and ye visited me not; hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not." This will never be repeated, after Christ has said it from the Judgment-seat: but, should it even be pardoned by Him in your case, how could you ever forgive yourself, when you see the poor of the flock at his right hand? Why, their very silence and cordiality will then be more humiliating to you (although not at all intended to be so) than the most cutting reproofs.

Sympathy with poor and afflicted Christians is, remember, as much a *leading* as it is a lovely feature of heavenly character. It is the very brightest feature of the *social* character of the Angels of God. We know more about their sympathy with the penitent, the suffering, and the dying, than of their nature or their history. I have sometimes come, in thought, to "the innumerable company of Angels," saying to myself, without any difficulty, until I saw them in the visions of John, "Are they not all ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation?" Whilst I thought of them only as a whole, I was not much humbled by their ministry. But when I began to observe them, one by one, in the glass of the Apocalypse, I have been compelled to exclaim,—What, *all* ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation? That Angel—"having the Seal of the Living God?" Yes; he has it to seal His servants on earth. What, those four Angels "having the four winds of the earth?" Yes; "that the winds should not blow to hurt" the trees in the garden of

God! But that Angel, "clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow around his head, and his face as it were the sun," is he too a ministering spirit to men? Yes; and well pleased to hold in his hand "*a little book!*" But that Angel, "having the key of the Bottomless Pit, and a great Chain, in his hand," is he too a ministering spirit to man? Yes; he shall bind Satan, and shut him up for a thousand years, that he may "not deceive the nations."

Truly, *they are all ministering spirits!* Yes; and any of them would have gloried to carry Lazarus to heaven. All of them rejoiced when *you* repented: and, is there any heir of salvation, you are ashamed to own, or unwilling to aid? Woman! "know thyself;" thy duty; thy destiny.

No. VII.

VARIETIES, FROM FRETFULNESS.

ANY one can expose or reprove that feverish and fretful care, which is always foreboding the worst, or embittering life by complaints, and suspicions, and clamour.

It is peculiar to the Saviour, to treat undue care, with equal tenderness and fidelity. He makes the fretful and the foreboding feel, that he knows thoroughly "what is in them," and yet that he feels for them. Whilst he measures and weighs their unbelief so minutely, that we lay our account with hearing Him say, "They have no faith at all in Providence," to our surprise, He only says to them, "O, ye of little faith." Thus, just when He seems about to disown them entirely, for their distrust of Providence, he lays his hand upon them as

gently as upon sinking Peter, asking, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Did you ever mark the inimitable skill with which the Saviour met the over-anxiety of his first disciples, when they began to dwell too much, and too peevishly, upon the questions, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

For a moment He almost identified their "carking care" about life and the means of life, with the clamorous solicitude of the heathen, for temporal things: "after all these things do the *Gentiles* seek:" but He did not leave them to suspect, from this reproof, that they stood in no nearer relation to God, than the Heathen. No; He immediately added, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Matt. vi. 32. Thus, in the same breath, He rebuked their wrong spirit, and yet upheld their adoption. "This is not the manner of man, O Lord God!"

Did you ever observe, that He never calls upon us to compare our lot with that of these

who are *above* us, or with that of those who are *below* us, upon the ladder of Providence? Except in the single case of persecution or reproach for His own name's sake, He does not even remind us of the greater trials of some others. "So persecuted they the Prophets which were before you," is the only instance in which He teaches patience or contentment, by comparisons. This is another remarkable peculiarity in the ministry of the Saviour. He taught Providence from nature, not from society. He made the *lilies* of the fields, or the *birds* of the air, his texts, in preference to all the facts which the varieties of life furnished, whether his object was to reprove or to soothe, the fears of his disciples.

There was consummate wisdom in this, whether you see it or not. It would do you good, to "consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air," when you feel the burden of your cares overwhelming. This may seem very unlikely at first sight, to you. Like myself, you may be ready to say,—my cares

are too heavy to be alleviated by such considerations: it seems almost mockery, or mere sentimentality, to send me to learn of birds or lilies. What could the growth of flowers, or the preservation of birds, teach me? What light could such common things throw upon my *uncommon* anxieties?

In this flippant way, and in this wrong spirit, are we inclined to meet the Saviour's advice: for there is no *sense* in such objections. They are mere sound. Accordingly, we should be condemned out of our own lips, were He to press us with the single question, —What benefit do you derive from brooding over your cares? You think and say, that you could derive neither light nor good from considering the things I commend to your notice. You cannot, however, say that the consideration of them would do you any *harm:* whereas I know, and you must acknowledge, that the views you take of your cares rather aggravate than alleviate them. You contrast your lot with those *above* you; and that mor-

tifies you; you compare it with those *below* you: and that discourages you, because you are thus compelled to see how you may sink still lower in the world. Thus when you look *up* the ladder of life, you are dissatisfied; and when you look *down* it, you are ready to despair. Now, to say the least, feelings of this kind would not be produced by considering how the lilies grow, and how the birds are provided for! I readily grant, that such little things do not appear capable of teaching much wisdom: but still, what they do teach gives no offence: which is, you know, more than can be said with truth, of some of the *graver* lessons you get, occasionally, *from certain persons.*

Besides there is a great deal of *pride* in our reluctance to be "shut up" to an exclusive dependence upon God, and to a complete deference to His will. For, why should we be *less* dependent than irrational things? We are not so pure as the lily, nor so innocent as the bird. We can, indeed, do more for our-

selves, and we can think much; but if both our doing and thinking have for their real object, to try how far we can take our affairs out of the hands of God, into our own hands, we need not wonder that God should cross us at times, and always leave us to feel that we cannot remove nor lighten our burdens by impatience.

You do not believe, perhaps, that you want to take your affairs out of the hands of God, into your own hands. There may be only two or three things in your lot, which you wish to alter: and as there are many good things in the lot of others, which you are content to be without, you think it rather unfair to be charged with pride or perverseness, merely because you want to have your own way in a few points. Besides, you may even be conscious that one great reason, why you are so dissatisfied with some things, is, because they distract your mind, and thus prevent you from serving God so well as you wish to do. It is, therefore, you think, both ungenerous and un-

just, to be suspected of, much more to be charged with, any such impious design as that of wanting to be independent of Providence. You never dreamt of such a thing—did you?

Do not answer this question, until you have considered another peculiarity in the Saviour's lessons on Providence. He does not teach confidence in, nor resignation to Providence, either as abstract duties, or for their own sake, as Christian virtues; but chiefly for the sake of keeping up the spirit and habit of prayer, and a proper regard to the eternal welfare of the soul. Now the fact is, we really *pray* no more, either for spiritual or temporal blessings, than just to the extent of our sense of entire dependence on God. Our words may go beyond this; but our praying stops where our sense of dependence on the Divine good-will and power ends. There may be some worship and some devotion in what we say to God, when we no longer feel utterly helpless, nor absolutely at his disposal; but there is no prayer. Nothing is prayer, but that asking, or

seeking, which proceeds from a full conviction, that God alone can help or uphold us.

Now we are unable to bear this deep sense of utter helplessness, in regard to *every* thing we need for life and godliness. Our spirit would sink entirely, if it always felt *all* its needs, as it feels some of them. Our Heavenly Father does not forget this. "He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust." He teacheth us dependence, as well as other things, only as we are "able to bear" the discovery. Accordingly, it is only at a *few* points in the circle of our wants, or of our weaknesses, that we are compelled to cry out, "Lord save, or I perish." It is only now and then that the full truth of the oracle, "vain is the help of man," is forced deeply home upon us. We are not left, however, to forget this oracle, nor to give up that prayer. God will have us—by some means—sensible of our absolute dependence on His will.

Now, what if the hardship, the cross, or the burden, which you and I so want to get rid of,

and which we bear so ill, be the very best thing, indeed the only thing, that could keep us at the *feet* of God? Remember; we must be kept there by something. It is also but too true, that those things in our lot which please us most, do not send us oftenest into our closets, even for *thanksgiving*—to say nothing of supplication for their continuance. Might not, therefore, the removal of the cross which we fret under, remove us from the closet altogether?

Now this is just the *secret* of our case. That one thing in our lot, which we are so anxious to get rid of, is the very thing which makes us feel that we cannot control Providence, nor do without help from God. Were, therefore, that "cup to pass away," this *feeling* would pass away with it.

It is all fallacy or fancy, to reckon otherwise. We may mean well, but we judge ill, when we take for granted that we should serve God better, if our chief anxiety were taken away. I do not, of course, intend by this remark, to

convey the idea, that no other cross could keep us aware of, or awake to, our entire dependence on God. He could make any cross or crook in our lot, answer the same purpose. But, why should he change the rod which checks us; or, why should we wish it changed for another? Another must be sent in its place; and must be heavy enough to produce in us, as in Paul, the settled conviction that God is MASTER.

THE END.